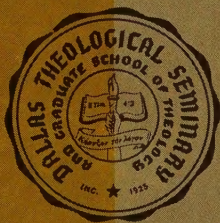


THE CALL OF LENT
TO PENITENCE, DISCIPLINE
AND CHRIST

H. C. O. MOULE, D.D.

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THE CALL OF LENT

THE CALL OF LENT

TO PENITENCE, DISCIPLINE
AND CHRIST

BY

H. C. G. MOULE, D.D.

BISHOP OF DURHAM

*Show me myself, the darkness and the sin,
And then Thyself reveal, and rule within.*

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VENI

COME, Holy Comforter, celestial Light,
Relieve from all obscurity our sight ;
Come, Holy Comforter, celestial Fire,
Our souls with love and purity inspire ;
Hear, Holy Ghost, our supplicating cry,
Nor leave the grace Thou gav'st to droop and die.

Come, Holy Comforter, a Saviour's love
Reveal, and fix our hearts on joys above ;
Come, Holy Comforter, the flesh subdue,
And aid us, one with Christ, His will to do ;
Hear, Holy Ghost, our supplicating cry,
Nor leave the grace Thou gav'st to droop and die.

HENRY MOULE (about 1845).

CONTENTS

	PAGE
NOTE	9
I. LENT	11
II. SIN	13
III. SIN : CONVICTION	16
IV. SIN : THE FLESH	18
V. SIN : THE WORLD	21
VI. SIN : THE DEVIL	24
VII. SIN IN THE INDIVIDUAL (i.)	27
VIII. SIN IN THE INDIVIDUAL (ii.)	29
IX. SIN IN THE INDIVIDUAL (iii.)	32
X. SIN IN THE COMMUNITY (i.)	35
XI. SIN IN THE COMMUNITY (ii.)	37
XII. SINS IN THE COMMUNITY (i.)	39
XIII. SINS IN THE COMMUNITY (ii.)	42
XIV. SINS IN THE COMMUNITY (iii.)	45
XV. SINS IN PRIVATE LIFE (i.)	47
XVI. SINS IN PRIVATE LIFE (ii.)	50
XVII. SINS IN PERSONAL LIFE (i.)	52
XVIII. SINS IN PERSONAL LIFE (ii.)	56
XIX. SINS OF OMISSION	58
XX. SINS IN SECRET	60
XXI. THE REPENTANT LIFE : DISCIPLINE (i.)	63
XXII. DISCIPLINE (ii.) : THE BODY	66

	PAGE
XXIII. DISCIPLINE (iii.) : THE SOUL . . .	68
XXIV. DISCIPLINE (iv.) : STUDY OF THE BIBLE	72
XXV. DISCIPLINE (v.) : PRAYER (1) . . .	75
XXVI. DISCIPLINE (vi.) : PRAYER (2) . . .	77
XXVII. DISCIPLINE (vii.) : THE HOLY COMMUNION	81
XXVIII. DISCIPLINE (viii.) : SORROWS . . .	83
XXIX. DISCIPLINE (ix.) : SERVICE ; HOPE . .	86
XXX. THE PASSION	89
XXXI. THE CROSS (i.) : ITS WONDER . . .	91
XXXII. THE CROSS (ii.) : ATONEMENT . . .	94
XXXIII. THE CROSS (iii.) : REDEMPTION . .	97
XXXIV. THE CROSS (iv.) : SURRENDER (1) . .	99
XXXV. THE CROSS (v.) : SURRENDER (2) . . .	102
XXXVI. THE CROSS (vi.) : THE SYMPATHY OF THE CRUCIFIED	104
XXXVII. THE CROSS (vii.) : THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS	107
XXXVIII. THE CROSS (viii.) : ' THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS '	110
XXXIX. HEART-COMMUNION WITH THE CRUCIFIED	113
XL. THE GRAVE	116
XLI. ' THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION ' .	119
<i>L'Envoi</i>	123
THE CRUCIFIED	126

NOTE

THIS book has been written with a single and simple aim. It hardly needs saying that I address it only to the Christian believer, asking to minister to him, if I may, in all humbleness and fellowship of spirit, in the path where a living and growing holiness is sought. I have long been convinced that the inmost secret of such life and growth is nothing other than faith, that is to say, in fact and practice, a trusted CHRIST, welcomed without reserve into the heart. But also I realize, and always more as life advances, that godly fear, lowly penitence, and watchful discipline, are, in the progress of the Christian life, vital to the health, strength, and simplicity of that faith. From that point of view I find an ever new significance and value in the religious observance of Lent, with its tender and glorious climax in the Passion and Easter.

I have written with these ideals always in view. May the heavenly Master, in His grace, be pleased so to use whatever is true to His mind in these pages that it may aid, in however modest a measure, His servants, the men and women to whom His will is dear, and who seek to 'supply in their faith

virtue,'¹ that is to say, the disciplined purpose and practice of the believing life.

Two great public interests have occupied countless hearts while this book has been writing, the World War, and the National Mission. The War is referred to here and there. The National Mission is not explicitly mentioned, although its aims and hopes have been always present to my mind. I have avoided on purpose giving prominence to either. In God's mercy, the War may find its end in a righteous peace in a not distant future, though positive predictions are still wholly premature. And the Mission, while we pray that it may only lead on to a *continuous* rising of national righteousness in godly fear, has its own necessary time-limits. My little book tries to deal with permanent needs, means, and hopes.

For a fuller treatment of some of the subjects which fall here under the heading of 'the Cross,' I venture to refer to my small volume, *Thoughts on Christian Sanctity*, published (by Seeleys) some years ago.

HANDLEY DUNELM.

*Curragh Chase, Co. Limerick,
September, 1916.*

¹ 2 Peter i. 5 (R.V.).

* * The poem of which part is quoted on p. 110 may be had as a leaflet (not fewer than fifty copies) of Messrs. Speaight, 98 Fetter Lane, E.C.

THE CALL OF LENT

I

Lent

IT is Ash-Wednesday. Let us share together some thoughts, some prayers, such as a new Lent may awaken in the soul.

LENT: the word is familiar. Its associations are grave, for they have much to do with the Sin of man, the supreme evil and sorrow of our being, and so with sin's issues and results, its mischief and its peril. There is a stern sadness involved even in the good connexions of the word. For the Church has always associated the Season with truths and teachings about our path of escape from sin which have to do rather with the narrowness and steepness of the way than with its green fields and quiet waters. The disciplines of earnest religion rather than its joys and songs are suggested by the recurrence of Lent. The word seems filled with ideas of tears and contrition, of vigil and fast, of the judgment-seat of the Holy One, of the thought of Him before whom 'the heavens are not clean,'¹ but with whom however 'we have to do.'²

Well, it is altogether for our good that there should be a season, a long season, which can by its very name call us men and women of the Church to

¹ Job xv. 15.

² Heb. iv. 13.

remember, to ponder, to receive deep into our being, facts of that sort and their bearing upon ourselves. If ever in any age it was well for man that he should be summoned out of his exterior life, whether strenuous and noisy or easy and comfortable, and drawn into the solemn shadows of warning and threatening truth, is it not more than ever well for us to-day to be stopped thus by a monitor, and told to think? The vast sounds and movements of modern life, material and visible, the clamorous speed and stress all around us, the imperious influence of things 'seen and temporal,' tell tremendously against the depth and strength of faith and of the life of faith. It is no mere accident that 'the modern man does not worry much about his sins.' The often quoted words, whatever may be the spirit of them, express a fact whose connexions and causes lie deep within our modern speed of living. I know that the 'rush' of life is not the whole explanation. Modes of thought have come up in our age, as modes and changes came up in all ages, which muffle, which too often stifle, the awful voice of conscience. The great words 'evolution,' 'development,' 'inheritance,' and the like, have come somehow to be thus misused, till they leave too often an impression as if we were each only a bundle of irresponsible results from immeasurable processes of production. But the 'rush' of human living at present, with its always growing publicity and glare, favours these mental influences only too powerfully. It gives to countless minds a sort of hurried persuasion, beyond all reason, in their favour. And all this is deadly mischief, nothing less. So forty days annually of persistent appeal to think, and to

kneel down, and to rise with the Cross upon our shoulder, are none too many.

Yet meantime LENT is intended also, and in harmony with its sterner suggestions, to be a name of beauty and of light. Lent is just the old Teutonic word LENZ, which, being interpreted, means SPRING. And Spring is, to be sure, the time of winds, keen and strong, of showering clouds, and ever and again of snows and the sting of frost. But also it is the time of the birds' blessed voices in the budding trees, and of the shining out in the black earth of the beloved flowers under the reviving sun. Not otherwise, Lent is indeed the season of renewed severities with the self-life, of new pains of godly sorrow, deepened and hallowed at the Cross. But also it has to do with vernal growths of the peace and joy of faith, and with the fair beauties of the life of love, and with the song of victory over all temptation in the vital brightness of the slain and living Christ of God.

II

Sin

LET us venture together into some thoughts, simple but attentive, about Sin.

The word is short. The word is familiar, so familiar that often it is used quite lightly and by the way. As we saw just now, the deeper and sterner ideas raised by the word are not much in fashion to-day. To a vast extent, 'modern' people 'do not worry about their sins.' They do not treat the question of their sins as grave, pressing, threatening; a something connected with the danger and the death of the soul.

It is possible that this attitude of mind may be shaken and discredited a good deal for the future, by the voice of that grim Preacher, the World-War. A Frenchman has said that the German Power has done the world one great service—it has restored to it the belief in evil. The words are a luminous paradox. They mean that we, civilized people in general, during a long spell of peace, discovery, industry, and commercial advances, occupied now with getting and gain, now with luxuries and amusements, had grown so lax, so morally indolent, that we had been practically living on the theory that eternal differences are a dream of the past; that absolute right and wrong are ideas 'not of our time'; that moral white and black are only shades of the same always underlying gray. International trade, facilities of travel, information, pleasure, were softening all distinctions, towards an age not exactly golden, but at the worst, generally, gilded.

Then came the earthquake of 1914. The easy world soon found then how thin lay the crust of 'civilization,' developed on such lines, above a volcano of treachery, cruelty, lust, and immeasurable ruin. Not a few minds, including some of the most 'advanced,' have owned that since July, 1914, they have been driven to 'believe in evil,' aye, in an unseen but real Evil One.

Yet there is a vast need still, even for worshipping Christians, to pause, and kneel before the Holy Presence, and to think again of Sin. If the thought is followed out *there*, not in the chance talk, in the magazine article, or even in the scholar's study, but on the knees, in the Presence, we shall not 'worry'

over it, I think, but we shall *care*, with an awestruck and intense regard. We shall find ourselves by the side of a familiar figure, who will now seem to us very much alive, the Publican in the Temple. Before we know it, perhaps, we shall be saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'¹

What is Sin? It is the discord of our will with the pure and perfect will of God. Sin has many sides and phases. But that is its essence. There are fathomless mysteries in the phenomenon of sin. There is the mystery of its origin, its existence at all in the creation which owes its being to holy and almighty Love. There is the mystery of its universality, the dark and cryptic fact that no sane and wakeful human conscience reports the self to the self to be quite right morally; that commonly the souls manifestly most virtuous are most 'convinced' of their deep discords with pure and perfect right. That fact, well weighed, is sufficient testimony to the dark truth which the Church, the disciple of Scripture, calls 'Original Sin, the corruption of man's heart.'²

For the moment at least, however, we may put these mysteries reverently by, and close our chapter with the description, once more, of what Sin in its essence is. It is the discord of our will with the eternal harmony, with the pure and perfect will of a God infinite and personal, absolute in purity and love, Author of our existence, King and Judge eternal of our spirits.

¹ Luke xviii. 13.

² R. Browning: *Gold Hair: a legend of Pornic*.

III

Sin : Conviction

STILL in that sacred Presence which is 'about our path and about our bed,'¹ still recollecting Him 'before whom the heavens are not clean,' and 'with whom we have to do,' let us think further about Sin.

We are 'modern' people. So we will not 'worry' about sin. No ; we will go deeper than the region of worry. We will sink into our own spirits, and there we will call on the Lord the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Promise of the Father, to speak with our spirit in His own way, and, true to the words of the Lord Jesus in the Paschal Chamber,² to 'convict us in respect of sin.'

Perhaps my reader, whom I address, God knows, not as a critic, not as a Pharisee, (impossible folly,) but in the dear fellowship of human life, has been himself, in some marked sense, 'convicted in respect of sin.' It may have been a call somehow to the conscience, urgent with a strange emphasis, as from outside yourself. It spoke about some detail of wrong, perhaps wholly internal, a thing of thought, imagination, wish ; perhaps of act or habit, the emergence of internal evil. Or it may have gone deeper. It may have struck the vital centre of your moral being. It may have spoken to you, in a whisper more arresting than thunder, about your discord with the Holy God at the very base of life. You have '*glimpsed*' the dark and formidable evil there—not merely this bad thing or that, but the

¹ Psalm cxxxix. 3 (Prayer Book). ² John xvi. 8 (R.V.).

wrong attitude of the personality itself towards its Author. You have realized its resistance, conscious sometimes, but so as to betray a subconscious permanence of resistance, to His gracious, beautiful, necessary, inexorable claim for the love of the creature which He made, the creature which He loves, but with whose negative to Himself it is quite impossible He should be pleased. The conviction has shaken you to the centre. No visions, perhaps, of retributive severity, imaged in concrete forms, may have beset you. No outer darkness, no fiery pain in store, has shaken your soul. No, but a fear of that deserved isolation of your being from its Author which is as the terrible 'cold of space' in the spiritual world.

Almost equally, and in connexion with each other, you have seen, in such 'times of finding,' while the Spirit of God has spoken to the spirit of sinful man, two dark aspects of the one thing, Sin. You have seen the *guilt* of sin. That is to say, you have felt it as the violation of a law, perfect, holy, and eternal, which is the very bond and corner-stone of the moral universe—a violation which means condemnable offence at a supreme bar. And you have seen also and touched the *misery* of sin for the sinning being, its black and clinging mire, its deforming bondage, its power to set up within the human person that dolorous conflict between the conscience and the will which can press the cry even from a 'modern' soul: 'O wretched man that I am!' ¹

Such dark hours are actualities. Shall I hesitate, sinner that I am, to say that I have known them,

¹ Romans vii. 24.

in experiences such as leave their scars for all time upon the heart? If an Apostle, in Romans vii., could analyse without mercy his own conflict, and later in life, near the goal, could own himself 'chief of sinners,'¹ may not the unworthiest of disciples, if it will serve even one of his brethren, confess the mercy which long ago, amidst a perfect quiet and cheerfulness of surroundings, shewed himself to himself, in the light of resisted Holiness?

And I just remember, in earliest childhood, the radiant face of an aged woman, my Father's parishioner. She died a few years later, murmuring a hymn of faith. But (such her own sane and humble confession was, even to the end,) in a life humanly blameless she had reached eighty-two—and had never once loved God, or done an act for His sake. That conviction shook her to her soul's depths. She knew sin. When I, a little child, saw the yet remembered *light* in the beautiful old face, she knew, she saw, Christ. But first she had known, had seen, herself, her sin.

IV

Sin : The Flesh

SO, not as scholars, nor as philosophers, but as sinners, human beings made by God for God, but fallen into discord with His pure will, we have pondered the idea of Sin. Rather, we have touched the vast and mysterious idea at a point or two, that we may realize a little the mass and weight of the thing, as one might touch here and there in the dark some rocky buttress of the hills.

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

A little more definition and distinctness may come into our thoughts if we pause here to consider one word, familiar in Scripture, which has much to do with sin, and often indeed denotes its very principle. That word is 'the Flesh.'

Consult a Concordance, and you will see at once that the word covers several meanings, varying with the matter in hand. Often it denotes simply the tissue of the bodily frame, human or bestial: 'There is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts.'¹ Often, gliding into the abstract, it means humanity, the race of men; as when the word was spoken on the eve of the Flood: 'The end of all flesh is come before me.'² In the combination, 'flesh and blood,'³ it indicates particularly man in his mortal state, the frail being who lives to die.

Yet again, as contrasted with man's spirit, it sums up our region of physical and emotional sensibility: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'⁴ But in the writings of St. Paul particularly (and we remember that he writes as 'the chosen vessel, to bear Christ's name'⁵) the word very often means that in us which is definitely sinful; a centre of wrong thought, wish, and action; a foul spring whose waters are the whole variety of wrong imaginings, cravings, utterances, and doings. One passage may suffice for many. In Gal. v. 16-24 the Apostle sets opposite to each other, as rival possibilities in human life, 'the fruit of the Spirit,' the full-orbed loveliness of the Christian character, and 'the works of the flesh,' the black picture of sins wrought out by sin.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 39.

² Gen. vi. 13.

³ e.g. Matt. xvi. 17.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 41.

⁵ Acts ix. 15.

And he puts before us there (ver. 19-21) the whole range of transgressions, in all its types. Some of these are evils obviously 'fleshly,' gross sins and scandalous offences, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness. But others are as entirely 'mental' as can well be; hatred, rivalries, wrath, envyings. Plainly 'the flesh,' in that connexion, is something other than only the corporeal region with its avenues and vehicles for impure desires and defiling commissions. And we are led to the result that, as the result of subtle processes of unconscious thought which need not be analysed here, St. Paul found the word ready to his hand in the sense of that 'self-life' in which man makes his own will, not the will of his Lord, his centre and his law. It has been pointed out, quaintly perhaps, but not amiss, that the words 'flesh' and 'self' are spelt by almost the same letters, and that this may serve as a help to the recollection of interpretations.

We have always to remember, distinctly and deliberately, that 'self,' if it means personality, is good; it is our inalienable prerogative as we are the moral creatures of a personal Creator; but that when 'self' is used, as very often, both in religious connexions and otherwise, for the self-willed, self-centred, life, it is bad, it is sin. It then denotes the inmost essence of all sinfulness, the person's preference of his will to the will of God. The 'flesh' of St. Paul's mystic language, which has passed into the language of the Church, is just that 'self.'

What then, once more, is 'the flesh,' expressed in the language of human life? It is whatever in us does not submit to God in loyal devotion, does not

follow God in glad fidelity. It is whatever in us does not love God, who is holy Love.

The 'works' of that originating centre may be grossly sensual: fornication, uncleanness of every sort, drunkenness in all its hideous licence. Or they may be the subtlest forms of selfishness: 'mental' motions, vanity, pride, envy, greed. They are all however alike in this. They come of that in us which loves not God.

V

Sin : The World

THUS far we have considered our 'inner man' only. We have thought about sin and sinning very nearly as if we sinners, each in himself or herself, stood alone in life, alone with God. Not absolutely so indeed, for many of the sorts of evil *doing* we have referred to demand relations with other people. Anger, envy, for example, cannot be felt *in a vacuum*. But as to the occasion of sinning, the force that sets it going, we have thus far looked only inside ourselves. We have thought of that within us which does not love God.

Alas, however, we have to recollect at once, in pondering our sinnings, that we do not stand alone in life. We are surrounded by 'the World.' We are imbedded in 'the World.' And the World, as we are looking at it now, is a power on the side of sin. If 'Self' is an evil force lodged within our citadel, 'the World' is a force on the same side encamped around it. And the two are in vital contact and relation.

At our Baptism we were not only invested with the great name and privilege of the children of God, to be claimed for living realization in due time. We were at once signed with the Cross of the Lord, in token that we should also, in due time, be His faithful *soldiers*, members of His 'expeditionary force,' in a great and perpetual campaign. That war (so the sacramental words reminded all hearers) is waged against a three-fold enemy, a Triple Alliance of evil; 'against sin, *the world*, and the devil.' We have thought a little already about 'Sin.' Soon we will ponder the mystery and fact of the Devil. Here let us pause to enquire about 'the World.'

This word, like that other word 'the flesh,' when we turn to Holy Scripture for its use, is found to cover several meanings. It often denotes, quite simply, the created universe: 'God made the world, and all things therein.'¹ It means again the race of man,² the human universe: 'God loved the world.' But then again it means something which God cannot love, for He bids us not love it: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.'³ It means something which the Lord Jesus met in combat, and conquered: 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'⁴ It means something to which His followers do not belong, and they are to live as those who do not belong to it: 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world'; 'Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'⁵

Here again, as when we thought over the meaning

¹ Acts xvii. 24.

² John iii. 16.

³ 1 John ii. 15.

⁴ John xvi. 33.

⁵ John xv. 19, xvii. 16.

of 'the flesh,' we will not attempt subtle enquiries; we will not ask *how* the word 'world' (*cosmos*, in the Greek, with the purely good original meaning of 'order') came to denote a great force of evil. Let us take the fact as it is, and ask what, in its essence, in these cases, must the word 'world' mean. The answer, I think, is simple. It means all and everything, in the human life and order around us, which 'is not subject to the law of God,'¹ which does not love God.

In man is 'the flesh'—which does not love God. Around him, intimately near, a penetrating environment, is 'the world'—which does not love God. Truly he is in a perilous state. If the eternal personal Holy Love is a reality, this discord with that Love, within, around, is a deadly thing for man.

What for us, for me, for you, is the world? No one can answer that question offhand for another. It is complicated, for one thing, by the fact that sometimes things purely good in their sort become, as it were, 'the world' to us, by being occasions to us for wandering from loyal love to God. Music, art of other sorts, noble literature, the young man's active sports, the dear affections of the home—each one of these things, pure and good in itself, may be allowed the place in our wills, the central place, which belongs to God in Christ alone. And so sometimes we are warned that they are thus, to us, 'the world.' Yet it seems truer to say that 'the flesh' is to blame in such a case. It is 'self' which puts the created good on the good Creator's throne within—and so spoils and loses the blessing of the created good.

¹ Rom. viii. 7.

But there are great and genuine evils around us, a real 'evil world.' There are trends and habitudes adverse to godly fear ; old maxims of selfishness ; bad traditions which excuse a *man's* uncleanness, a young man's ' wild oats ' ; theories which condone covetous oppression on an employer's part, or cynical unfaithfulness, collective tyranny, on the part of workers ; a parent's preference of the advancement to the godliness of son or daughter ; merciless judgments upon the fallen and unhappy. These things, diffused in the community, and swaying more or less the individual's thought and judgment, these, and all principles and usages which favour oblivion of God in any hour of life, these are indeed ' the world.'

And ' they that are Christ's '¹ are pledged, are enlisted, not as Pharisees but as penitents and believers, not only to ' come out and be separate '² from such things, with a modest and brave decision, put to combat them, as occasion shall be given, in their great Captain's name.

VI

Sin : the Devil

IT is not without a pause, not without a certain fear, that I approach this chapter. More than one condition of things, certainly in our time, may well make a man think twice before he discourses of the Devil.

In the first place, the definite belief in the existence at all of a personal Power of Evil is very widely given up, even among those who call themselves Christians.

¹ Gal. v. 24.

² 2 Cor. vi. 17.

It is very often supposed to be 'a phantom of the cave,' a belief generated in past ages of human development, when the unknown was mistaken for the terrible, and the sterner sort of natural phenomena seemed like the works of a vast and malignant will, or of many such wills. To-day we have come to know much more about the universe, and about ourselves. This mental daylight, it is thought, has banished these spectres; civilization has exorcized out of us the idea of the Devil!

Then again, from a perfectly different region, comes another difficulty. No matter how, but somehow, there has gone on for ages a sort of thought and talk about the Devil which has linked the very word either with all that is ribald and profane, or at least with the grotesque and ridiculous. This does not help to serious reflections upon the theme of this short chapter.

Yet I am sure we do well to look steadily, from beside the feet of Christ, and holding in our hands the Book which to Him was divine, at the darkness where this dread Enemy has been believed to be.

Beyond all question, unless we explain away the most explicit words, the Devil was a fact, was a person, to the Lord Jesus Christ. The record of the Temptation¹ must have come direct from Him, unless we treat it as a sheer creation of the early Christian mind. And whatever we allow for the symbolic terms in which He may have thought fit to describe such an infinitely awful interview, He left it on His followers' souls that He had met, had dealt with, a Spirit of Evil as real, as personal, as that Holy Spirit

¹ Matt. iv. 1-11, Luke iv. 1-13.

who just before had descended on Him by the Jordan. And assuredly He bequeathed to His Apostles a great consciousness, and a great dread, of the Adversary. They held that he, in the darkness, everywhere withstood their Lord and them.¹

In Scripture, certainly, the belief of the being and power of the Evil One is no fog of the past, melting away in the light of a better present. It is exactly in the New Testament, far more than in the Old, that this living shadow of death falls broad and deep across the scene.

What, we reverently ask, is the spiritual use to us of the belief that the Devil, personal, mighty, practically ubiquitous in his agents and his influences, lives, moves, and has actual being; that he co-ordinates, manages, energizes, the evil of 'the flesh' and of 'the world' against the soul of man?

First, assuredly, that belief, seriously and reverently held, is a mighty stimulant to watching, to prayer, and to keeping close to God. 'Be sober, be vigilant—for your adversary the Devil goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.' I remember, long years ago, reading a book in which the testimonies of Holy Scripture to the reality and activity of the Spirit of Evil and his hosts were collected and focussed, soberly and with elaborate care. The immediate personal result was to drive me, with a new sense of need, an awful yet good and wholesome fear, to nothing short of the Personal and Eternal FRIEND. I saw that only so could I be assured of safety in the dread presence of 'the authority of the Darkness.'

Then, one further thought, which can only be

¹ e.g. 2 Cor. ii. 11, Eph. vi. 11-16, 1 Pet. v. 8, 9, 1 John iii. 8.

suggested here. The belief in the Evil One has in it, however remote or hidden, a solemn cheer and hope. It is not nothing, in presence of the dread developments of evil within us and around, to remember that '*an Enemy*,' as captain and organizer of evil, 'hath done this.'¹ The evil, natural and moral, is not the mistake or oblivion of the Master. It is the midnight work of His Enemy. And if the Master, mysteriously, lets that Enemy, within stern limits, for purposes inscrutable, have his way for a while, His hand is yet almightily upon him. The feet of the Lord shall, in good time, tread down him, and all his works, for ever.

VII

Sin in the Individual (i.)

THUS far, briefly and with simplicity, we have considered Sin in its nature, and the powers and influences around us which make for sinning.

We have 'considered.' But we remember, as we use the word, how, over this formidable subject, we can never be merely thinkers. We are not detached observers of Sin, or of the World, or of the personal Power of the darkness. We are each of us a sinner. We are in perpetual contact, most of us certainly, one way or another, with the World. And the Devil means deadly mischief not only to other souls but to our own.

It is immensely important to the spiritual life to recollect—in the true sense of that grave word, recollection—that we are sinners. It is worth any

¹ Matt. xiii. 24-30.

pains of will, of thinking, of attention to ourselves, in the light of conscience and of God in His Word, to reach a steady moral conviction that we are this indeed—sinners in the sense of guilt, needing mercy, and sinners in the sense of defilement and bondage, needing cleansing and liberating power.

If we take Holy Scripture as our light and lamp, and let it throw its ray, kindled in heaven, within us and around us, I do not think we can doubt that the Faith of Christ is so presented there that it scarcely has a luminous meaning except for those who approach it and embrace it as sinners. Its glorious issues do indeed go off into heights and depths of light, purity, and all the greatness of exalted virtue. But the central fact of the Faith is the Incarnate Son CRUCIFIED. And no one has ever rightly understood the Cross who has not come to it as a sinner, and viewed it with a sinner's eyes.

We shall think more of this with more definite efforts of thought, later in this book, nearer to that Commemoration of the Cross with which Lent closes. But let us deliberately state it to ourselves here. The Faith of the Cross is meant primarily for the sinner. Its inmost import is shewn only to the human spirit which has come to that point, indicated in a great and pregnant passage by St. Paul, when '*the mouth is stopped,*' and the man just sees himself '*guilty before God.*' ¹

That confession, that vision, are best sought just there, at the feet of the Crucified. Consider what is said by that Crucifixion, by that slaying of that Person, by the very fact of it, about the mystery and the fact of sin.

¹ Rom. iii. 19.

Let me use a simple illustration. I have been taken with a serious illness. Scarcely aware that I am more than very poorly, I sink into a long unconsciousness, helpless on my bed, tended by kind hands. I awake, dazed and weak—and a stranger is beside me. I whisper a question to my nurse, who is he? She whispers back the name of the most celebrated doctor of the day, whose home is three hundred miles from mine. I need no more evidence to tell me that I have been very, very ill; my physical peril has been extreme.

And even so I look at 'the green hill far away,' and I ask who is the Sufferer there, and why He suffers. And I learn that it is God made Man, come down from heaven, 'for my salvation.' If that is so, there needs no judgment-trumpet, no 'fiery indignation,'¹ to tell me that I greatly need saving, as a very real sinner. HE, so come, so sacrificed, is proof supreme.

And now I have no difficulty with the General Confession, or the Litany, or the Confession at the Holy Communion. I stand afar off in the Temple of the Presence; alone, myself, myself. And I say, and I mean it from my soul: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'²

VIII

Sin in the Individual (ii.)

IT is of supreme importance, and I am sure that I do right to use the word 'supreme,' that we should learn to say 'by heart,' in the deepest sense of heart,

¹ Heb. x. 27.

² Luke xviii. 13.

the Publican's prayer. Let us remember its precise terms. In the Greek of St. Luke,¹ more than in our English versions, its intimate and moving meaning comes fully out: 'O God, be reconciled, *be propitiated*, to me the sinner,' 'to me, sinner that I am.' Here is first a *direct* appeal. It must be punctuated so, in the light of the Greek. It is not, as so often it is quoted, 'God be merciful'—an aspiration, *indirectly* aimed. It is 'God, be merciful'—a cry addressed direct to the Holy One; for nothing else than that will do when the soul is quite awake. And the suppliant Publican sees, so the Greek intimates, that *a propitiation* only, an accepted sacrifice only, will secure the mercy needed; so real is the guilt, so awful is the law and the tribunal. And lastly, the prayer *isolates* the suppliant, it sets him alone and apart, in his penitence and his appeal, before the eternal Presence: 'To me, the sinner.' He has no sight, no thought, for other people's sins. He has no faculty for observing the proud transgression of the Pharisee who stands yonder confessing his own virtues. All the rest of the world may be holy, for all the Publican thinks at the moment. *He* is 'the sinner.' He, whatever others do, can do with nothing short of mercy, mercy first and last, the mercy found and assured through altar-sacrifice, through propitiatory pain. 'Be propitiated to me, sinner that I am.'

It is an attitude, a spirit, an utterance, that does not come by instinct to us 'moderns.' But we must learn to understand it, to appropriate it, unless we are to be Christians of a Christianity quite different from

¹ Luke xviii. 13. (See R.V., text and margin.)

that of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we shall find the Publican's prayer become our own, out of the very heart, in perfect genuineness, unforced, unartificial, in all the verity of inward vision, when we give ourselves full views of the Cross, and ask sincerely for the light of the Spirit shed upon it.

Wonderful it is to witness such confessions, made, not by reprobates and the fallen, brought at last 'to themselves,'¹ but by the saints. There rises to my inner sight as I write down these words the face of a woman friend of long ago ; it will soon be forty years since she slept in Jesus, to find herself, beyond one shadow of a doubt, 'absent from the body, present with the Lord.' I think with reverent and profound affection of that form and face so beautiful, that life so gently powerful for Christ in its spiritual loveliness, so natural, so supernatural. I feel still upon me thy spell of holy and humble consistency, true wife of my true friend in God, dear Katharine Pigou. But all the more solemnly I recall the gravity, tender and deep, amidst the last weaknesses and sufferings of that fair and beloved life, with which she looked up at me, as I reverently bent above her, and said to me softly, slowly: 'I begin to understand what it means, that *Christ died for sinners.*'

'If thou wert frustrate of thy hope
And didst indeed but die,
Then all beneath the starry cope
And all above's a lie.'

Yes, I hold that to be true, of such as she was. But, being such as she was, *that was how she saw herself,*

¹ See Luke xv. 17.

She took her stand by the side of the Publican, nay, by the side of the Thief. She knew that she had, but also she knew that she needed, all the aid of the Eternal Physician. And she said so, before she went upward to see His face. Well may such as I am say the same.

IX

Sin in the Individual (iii.)

YET a little more must be said before we pass from the special theme of Sin and the Individual. It is vital to a deep and hallowing Christian faith that the Individual should seek to see the very Self, as in the light of God, with its guilt, its penetrating stains, its bondage from within.

It has been said, and I think it is true, that all the great misbeliefs which Christian history records have at the root of them, as more or less a cause or condition, an inadequate sense of sin. I venture to say that in the history of the soul this is largely true as well as in the history of the Church. Certainly it is true, in a converse way, that we rarely find, if ever, a life strong and exemplary in virtue, in the Christian sense of virtue, that is to say, in practical holiness, in faithful, positive, worshipping correspondence with God's holy will, in which it is not somehow apparent that the man, or the woman, has learnt a great and awestruck sense, personally felt and applied, of 'the sinfulness of sin.'¹

A great Indian missionary of the last generation was appealing to an Afghan crowd in the bazaar,

¹ See Rom. vii. 13.

and spoke of the fact of universal sin. He was angrily contradicted by a man before him : ' That is not true. I know a woman who had no sin. She was wife of my English master, and she spoke to us of her Seyyid Isa,' her Lord Jesus, ' and prayed to Him for us. I knew her as she was, every hour and every day, and I say that she had no sin ; you lie about her.' ' Do you know what she thought about herself ? ' ' Ah, why do you ask me that ? That was the riddle. When she prayed, she spoke as if she was herself a sinner, a grievous sinner, even as we.'

Let us covet as spiritual treasure such knowledge of ourselves.

Of course this thought has to be placed beside other thoughts, to keep it in its true place and proportion. There is indeed such a thing as a quite unwholesome scrutiny of the inner world. It is possible to pore inwards till either every good activity, all the natural action of a useful and happy life, is paralysed by a morbid dread of wrong in the motive, or till, even worse, an unhealthy *interest* is set up in the symptoms of spiritual ' heart-disease.' Something far different from such introspection is what I mean. The right sort of penitence comes much more of looking up than of looking in. Take yourself, not to a microscope in a closed laboratory, but out into the daylight, into the scrutiny of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Use yourself to the principles, the precepts, the practice, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Discipline your consciousness to the fact that you are redeemed by Him on purpose that you may be true to Him. Think over at the day's close, quite soberly and quietly, what the actings of will have been, and

their issues in talk, in conduct. I dare affirm that then a penitence quite healthy, quite hopeful, while bowed as low as it can get at the feet of the Lord, will be the result. You will not be 'miserable,' in the sense of bewilderment and loss of hope. The exact opposite will be your case—at His feet. But you will have no trouble about the confession that you are 'a *miserable* sinner,' that is to say, a human soul which, in its great 'falling short of the glory of God,'¹ needs nothing short of *miseratio*, *mercy*, patience and healing undeserved.

Meanwhile this grave, intimate, deeply personal sight of sin's dread relation to yourself, will, rightly considered, only deepen and enlarge your solemn sense of the greatness and wonder of your human personality. It has been said that we should rather forget our own inner life, in the service of others, than 'waste time over our wretched selves.' I distinctly see the truth which these words distort; we shall say more about it in the next chapter. But if 'your wretched self' means your particular human personality, then that is, in its true idea, no wretched thing at all. It is the shadow and image of the supreme Personality. God willed it into being, to correspond with Himself, to know and to enjoy Him, and to be the wonderfully fitted 'vessel for His use' here and in the immortal life for ever. So, while you lay your self-will deep beneath His feet, reverence your personal self, for it is His image. And think therefore with awe about its sin, and with great desire about His salvation.

¹ Rom. iii. 23.

X

Sin in the Community (i.)

I HAVE just been saying that we must, for some urgent and vital reasons, seek, with spiritual purpose, to '*know ourselves*' as sinners, in the light of God. For some great interests of the soul we must, so far as we can, stand, or rather kneel down, each alone, before that Uncreated Light, as if no one else existed, no one but the person and his God. The very mystery and sacredness of our personality demands this. It must be so, if we would become at all what He first created us to be. It must be so, if we would have Him find us what He needs as His vehicles for others' good.

But now take the line of thought given us in those last words, 'for others' good.' No one can possibly be right with God who is indifferent to man. No one can rightly isolate himself in penitence before his Lord, passing into the confessional of the supreme Priest, and letting Him shut the door, who does so solely for his own spiritual relief, or growth, or health, and nothing more.

In the Christian plan of spiritual virtue, of a life lived aright with God and for Him, the call to personal penitence and humblest confession is indeed clear and compelling. But just as clear, just as imperative with all the weight of the will of God, is the call to live, in Him, for other people. We are under His orders to remember that we are not isolated; we are wonderfully one with others, responsible for others, under bonds of perpetual duty to them. In nature, we are inalienably members of the Race,

with its one humanity. In grace, we are members of the Church, the mystical Body of the Lord. And every human being is to us either an actual member of that organism, or a potential member. In Christ our Head, as well as in the order of human nature, and more wonderfully, more deeply, we are 'members' thus of all men.

The Lord and the Apostles leave us no doubt of the Christian's duty to live always, consciously and with watchful purpose, in relation to the human life around him. It may suffice to cite one great utterance, awful in itself and in its context : ' Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.' ¹

But there is another side to this truth of the Community of life and duty, and it is a side which closely touches these thoughts of ours concerning sin. There are such things, in grave reality, as 'community-sins,' if the word may be allowed. In a large community, and in a smaller one, in a family, a parish, a city, a nation, an empire, not only are there a multitude of individuals, each one a sinner, penitent and believing or not. There is also that latent, elusive, yet real and powerful thing, a common life. This is something other than numerous personal lives lived side by side ; rather, it is the collective result of thus living side by side ; a common spirit, a common trend, a common opinion, powerfully influencing common practice. To illustrate as simply as possible. There is such a thing, we all know, as public opinion, good or bad. This means not merely thousands of opinions existing near each other. It means a power

¹ Matt. xxv. 45.

generated by their sympathy, their blending, their consciousness of one another. And this public opinion, moulding public practice as it does, may often, unhappily, take the dark shape of a public Sin. And that sin does, in a sense, tell on the individual from outside, swaying him in wrong directions, by its perpetual and pervading influence, beyond his purely personal bias. Then also he is always, in his measure, responsible for it, unless he is very watchfully living above it and against it. He contributes to it, positively, or at least negatively. About this we will think further in the next chapter.

XI

Sin in the Community (ii.)

FROM our thoughts upon common life just now set out, two practical issues come up for the life of penitence, faith, and obedient virtue. They lie close together, yet distinct enough to be touched upon separately. The one is the penitent Christian's call to stand as clear as may possibly be, in abstinence, and in action, from 'community-sins.' The other is his call, in the intense fellowship of human life, in the recollection of the fact, however mysterious, of our common manhood, feeling the living bonds alike of race, of sin, of hope, of love, to contribute his own penitence and confession to the community. He must own the sin of the community as, in some real, some sacred sense, his own; he must himself kneel, with the community, before his Lord.

As to the first issue of the two just stated, let me say thus much. The call to 'stand clear, in abstinence and in action, from "community-sins"' is of course a call at once to self-scrutiny about our actual relation to any of them, and to the humblest confession of personal sin in the matter, wherever conscience, sanely enlightened, and quickened by the Holy Spirit, sees and shews it. Do we find ourselves silent about some 'community-sin,' where quite clearly, with more will, devotion, and courage, we need not be silent? Does the fear of an ignorant or perverse public opinion bar our supporting some just and reasonable protest and action against it, just because it is unpopular to do so? Are we taking adequate and practical care against making gain or enjoying pleasure which clearly involves 'community-sin'? We are not called by such enquiries to anything fantastic or unpractical, nor to anything whatever which means the advertisement of our own virtue. But we are called not to be afraid, in Christ, of the world, nor of the Devil; not to have conscious complicity with customs of opinion and practices of common life which are not right with God.

All these questions, and many more like them, are urgent for the really penitent believer. They are questions about personal sin in relation to common morality; about the individual's responsibility as to 'community-duties' and 'community-sins.' More and yet more, in our day, the Christian consciousness seems to be awaking to them—a token of light and hope in a troubled and often frowning sky. And to the true disciple such a rise in '*community-consciousness*' of duty will be a call to the deepest personal

self-questioning and confession, and to the appeal of faith to 'Him who strengthens us,'¹ that the man may, not as a citizen only but as a Christian, in these matters also, 'not be ashamed of Him and of His words.'²

Then let something be said of that second issue for the individual of the fact of the community and its life; the issue in a repentance, by the individual Christian, on behalf of the community. The community may seem to be morally asleep. The Christian may, in God's grace, be earnestly awake. Yes, but he is not therefore to play the Pharisee, wrapt in an isolating self-righteousness. Conscious of the inscrutable 'solidarity' of human life below its surface, he cannot, in his most watchful hour, wholly separate himself as the righteous from the sinners. In spirit, he draws all his fellows down upon their knees, and kneels in their very midst, confessing, and forsaking, '*our* iniquities.'

So did godly Nehemiah,³ in that great patriotic cry of penitence and confession with which his story opens. So, by the grace of God, thinking of our own dear sin-stained community, of ourselves as living members of it, will we also do.

XII

Sins in the Community (i.)

LET us follow out a little the subject of the last chapter. We have thought in outline of 'community-sins.' It may help us to reach our right point of view of them if we look at some examples in the concrete.

¹ Phil. iv. 13.

² Luke ix. 26.

³ Neh. i. 4-11.

Be it remembered that we take these examples and consider them with an object special, because spiritual. Our aim here is to get such a sight of them as will send us to our knees in self-examination about them, and in a confession of sin about them which shall recognize our part and lot in the common life, and so in its transgressions. If we meditate aright in this way, most surely we shall be on the watch, with a will quickened from above, *to do* what we can, equitably, wisely, to abate the evil and promote the corresponding good. But our first thought now is of spiritual attitudes towards public wrongs. We are observers, but also, and first, Christian penitents.

As a conspicuous example of 'community-sin,' then, let me first name that old and embittered evil, the keen, the often rancorous, controversy between 'capital' and 'labour.' I could not possibly touch here upon its long and troubled history, its more recent phases, and the hope, not without grave fears at its side, that the tremendous teachings of the War, above all as it has brought 'classes' together in a generous and glorious unity on the vast battle-field, may work for better things also in this long social campaign. I resist the temptation to speak of the hope of a future which may have for its watchword co-operation far rather than competition. As to things in their present position, I do not for a moment attempt hasty judgments upon the many complex problems of economics and society which beset the industrial controversy. One real danger in this matter is that the sincerely Christian citizen may lightly let himself be drawn on to the slippery ground of party politics and social prejudices

—a far different standpoint from that of spiritual insight into moral laws and the violation of them.

All I do here is to say, what for years I have sought to say with voice and with pen, that at the back of the troubled scene of industrial dispute there lies, quite definitely, sin—in the sense of man's 'discord with God.' The will of God as to human social relations is made amply clear in the Bible, by both the Prophets and the Apostles. It is just this, that each party in a human relation, such as that of master and man, shall think first of duties, and then, not till then, of rights. Each party ; I repeat it with the utmost emphasis. The master quite as much as the man ; emphatically so, when his position of (in many respects) advantage is recollected. The man, however, quite as truly as the master. He may use combination, no doubt, for the sake of balance in the bargain, but he should use it with unswerving regard to duties first, the duty, for example, of a steadfast respect for other men's personal freedom, and also the duty of a firm fidelity to contract and promise, a scrupulous thoroughness over the undertaken task, a free and high sense of the dignity and duty of well-wrought work.

And the private Christian, in view of this moral aspect of a great and persistent social problem—what will he do ? First, always, he will get apart with God about it. He will remorselessly scrutinize himself. He will try himself as master, if he is a master (and a shareholder is a limb of a great masterhood), asking if his duties to his men are a first charge on his thought. He will try himself as worker, if he is a worker, asking himself if, in

Christ's name, he is resolutely mindful of all the duties of his contract, his full obligation to the other party in it, his call always to be doing his best.

And then, whether or no the Christian is actually thus a person directly concerned ; even supposing him, or her, to stand as nearly as possible clear of the actual controversy ; nevertheless he, she, will recollect the oneness of the community, its common life, its common responsibilities. The most private Christian will penitently confess the 'community-sin,' in view of his own part and lot in the body. And such a penitent, in the most private aspects of private life, will use self-discipline, every day and hour, to live a life of duty to others, a life whose law is the postponement of 'self' to them.

XIII

Sins in the Community (ii.)

WE have tried to consider the sin involved in industrial strife within the Community, treating it as a matter for personal penitence, including the penitence which the individual, however clear he may be in his conscience as an individual, should own and feel as a member of the body. We have traced the sin to its essential character. It has proved to be an inversion of the Christian law of duties and rights, the law which bids me to think always first, with a reverent and wakeful conscience, of the rights of others and the duties of myself. The inversion of that law means, in brief, the preference of self-will to the will of God, which is the ultimate analysis of sin. And this type of sin emerges not

in industrial disputes only. It is present in power wherever commercial competition takes forms and uses methods ruthlessly indifferent to the good of others. For all such things, in their vast aggregate of evil, let us, let me, repent before God, as members of humanity, and children of the family of grace.

So also, so of course, with other great 'community-sins.' Let us think in this chapter of two of them, only touching the edge of such immense subjects, as we have done with that other evil. Let us say a little about Impurity, and a little about Intemperance. And we will keep full in view the spiritual purpose of our words about them.

It is obviously most difficult to talk about the prevalence, the cancerous pervading power, of Impurity. There is that in the heart which can respond to the mention with that sort of evil curiosity which is the utter, the eternal, opposite of penitence. Here certainly nothing is to be said which shall invite that bad motion of the mind. Let us only remember, what is certain, what is tremendously familiar to all who know realities, as responsible workers for God and for good have to know them. A little way under the surface, at furthest, diffusing itself far and wide, there is a tremendous 'corruption in the world,' in our world, 'through lust.' The fell prevalence of deadly diseases generated directly by sin has lately been the subject of serious enquiry by the State, and has brought out formidable disclosures of extent and virulence. The records of the law-courts within these recent years have shewn, with a stern emphasis, that shocking sins, not least against the very young, have grown in number. And all the while that old

rampart of impurity remains massive still, and very little shaken—the bad tolerance of vice *in men*, even while it is mercilessly condemned in women. *That* is a deep, complex, entrenchment of the forces of the foul and God-defying darkness.

Then what shall I say about the huge and sinister fact of Intemperance? In our Islands, in this year of grace, about half a million pounds a day are spent on drink. What those pounds buy—with legitimate exceptions, quite negligible amidst the colossal total—at its best is luxury, at its worst is perdition. Have you ever seen the perdition at close quarters? If you have—you may not be, you should not be, a *fanatical* prohibitionist; but you will remember that the fanatical prohibitionist has some excuse—in the home, and in the grave, of the intemperate. Yet so vast is the commercial status and bulk of the business of the drink-supply that, unless we have been greatly misinformed, the State itself knows not how to reduce it under a control calculated *only* for the better opportunity of national virtue. And apparently, the opinion of the community is not clear enough, is not strong enough, to bid the State act.

These facts of ‘community-sin’ are recited here for one immediate purpose, a spiritual purpose. Very definitely, very resolutely, before the Holy One, the Christian in earnest will examine self about them. And if, in the mercy of God, the individual, as individual, may give humble thanks for a clear conscience, *as member of the body* he will yet kneel, as amidst his fellow-members, and speak his repentance to his Lord: ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner.’

XIV

Sins in the Community (iii.)

YET once more we will think of some 'community-sins' as matters for the personal repentance of the member of the body.

I consider first a sin which is not such as to challenge an alarmed attention, like those we have considered already, yet is a genuine transgression by the community. I mean our all too facile acquiescence in great and acute 'inequalities of opportunity' as between classes and ranks of people. I am no revolutionary. I believe that a certain inequality, let us say variety, of means and of culture is as 'natural' in the human order, as much a result of great laws and forces in humanity, as inequalities of ground between plain and mountain are natural in the physical order, the result of the fact that the globe is alive, and has a history. The attempt really to level down, or even (the infinitely better ideal) to level up, till a strict uniformity of means and culture, and so of 'class,' is attained, can be successful, if ever, only at the cost of a tremendous and finally paralysing oppression of the individual and a sacrifice of the inestimable discipline of difficulty. But all this may be true, and yet leave it equally true that the community, the whole community, is at discord with the God of equity and love if it thinks and acts *with indifference* in face of the myriads of lives which enter on their course among us helplessly disadvantaged. It is a great 'community-sin' when the community cares not to be 'the keeper,' wisely, in well considered ways, but in earnest, of its weak, its

helpless, its hopeless—the members of its body which begin life with everything against them, which often continue life without a ray cast on the path by helpful kindness, and go on only to find a competitive society seemingly organized to baffle and wear them down.

I make no apology for stating what is the case of uncounted numbers in the modern world, and for doing so with no attempt here to suggest lines of practical action. My aim all through these chapters is to get myself and my reader into the right spiritual attitude towards ‘community-sins,’ and now towards *this* sin. We shall go forward at once more courageously and more wisely in such action as may open up to us for having first done something, and for always doing something, in severest self-examination before God, and in personal confession before Him of our part and lot, as members, in this ‘community-sin.’

Not for a moment do I forget the tangle of practical problems which surrounds this particular subject. But all the more for the thought of this I emphasize the true *spiritual* attitude about them, the will to see things in the light of nothing less than the will of God. We greatly need to consider ‘unequal opportunity,’ and, to name one sorrowful industrial problem, the slavery of ‘sweated’ workers, *first* upon our knees before Him, alone with Him, yet intensely conscious that we are one with the community.

One detail of duty, at once commercial and social, I seize this occasion to set out conspicuously for self-scrutiny and for the sort of confession I have indicated. It may be that the present stress, and also the moral appeals of war-conditions, has abated it ; but it was a great and grievous evil before the War. I mean

the sin of heartless and unprincipled indebtedness. Many a tradesman, still more many a tradeswoman, and, in another region of occupation, many a hard-worked doctor, has large money owing, year after year, by debtors, sometimes, of high social standing. Often such creditors are not strong enough in resources to insist on their dues, and to call in the law to enforce them. Such wrongs, such unrighteousnesses, would be impossible, unthinkable, in a really God-fearing community. Their existence calls us to our knees, to examine self, and to recollect our community of life—whatever may follow in the way of action upon such scrutiny and confession.

XV

Sins in Private Life (i.)

I PASS from the direct view of Sins of the Community. Not that very much, even on outstanding common evils, does not still ask for mention. I have not spoken about the public opinion which lets the wreck and misery wrought by gambling go on, with all the professional agencies which promote it. Nor have I called attention to the ‘discord with God’ which sounds aloud in the rancour, the unfairness, the untruth, so freely imported into the strife of party-politics—though the War has for the time at least abated this great ‘community-sin,’ for such it is. Nor again has mention been made of the flagrant common neglect, even within worshipping circles, of the Lord’s explicit and emphasized commands to

evangelize all human regions in His Name. But this is a small book. And my aim anyway is rather to set the reader's spiritual action going, in self examination and confession, than to do for him, or her, the work of thinking our great subject out. So I turn without more delay to call that reader's thought, in humbleness and fellowship, to some private forms of sin, to sins less obviously related to our large common life—though no sin, surely none, has *no* relation to wide circles. The sins I refer to now, some of them at least, pass all too easily current among us as matters of course, regrettable perhaps when they give trouble, but not precisely 'discords with God.' Yet such they are, if God is holy Love.

Take the region of Home, the life of the Family, as the scene of our reflections. Home is the gracious invention of man's Creator. He bade it come into being when He pronounced it ill for the man to be alone,¹ and the wife was given him, and the child. Beautiful beyond words is the true home, even in the always imperfect approach to the ideal which the best actual home makes. There on one hand affections spring up and ripen; they sun themselves and expand, 'through all the changing scenes of life'; they mature there for the blessing of other homes to come, and for immortality. There on the other hand, concurrently, in intimate relation with the affections, *character* gets its finest education, in the love-taught art of all that is unselfish, all that 'finds its felicity in another's good.' Alike the blisses and the griefs of a true Home are sacred lessons set by the Father of our spirits.

¹ Gen. ii 18.

But then, just because Home is the sphere of intimacy, the place where 'we are not on show,' is it not often precisely the scene where 'discords with God' are allowed, with sorrowful indifference, to have their way? Think of the temper, and of the tongue. I do not forget extenuations, as when the parent is harassed, or when the child is handled unwisely or unfairly. But I boldly say that, even so, God is able to tune sweet concords with His will within us if we, parent or child, will let Him do it. And then, in unnumbered cases, there is no extenuation. The hot or crabbed temper, the folly of unloving autocracy, the ugliness of sullen or rude rebellion, has *no* exciting cause except a fatal surrender to selfishness, to self-will, till the soul becomes the slave of its own worst element. And then, the tongue! Am I wrong if I say that the carelessness of very many good people about their tongues, at home, is such as to strike a strident 'discord with God'? Think how the meal-time is sometimes made the occasion for loveless, soulless, useless criticisms, unkind and unhealthy gossip, talked perhaps by fathers and mothers, while small sons or daughters listen—and learn. But all this is a 'discord with God,' harsh and utterly repulsive to Him. *Not one word* need the Christian ever say, on any subject, in any company, that is either untrue, unclean, or unkind; not one. And the soul alive to God will long, with a great desire, to live that *total abstinence* always out.

While the thought of parents' example is before us, let me appeal for self-scrutiny on what I may call the duty of a parental confession of faith in home-life. So that the example is set in gentleness

and sympathy, the father's and mother's example in the matter of Christian observance is incalculably important. What they think of public worship, of family prayer, of secret prayer, of the Bible and the use of it, of that great and sacred means of all good, now so tremendously discredited, reverence for the Lord's Day, will be sure to come out continually to the children's notice and to move upon their minds. Sooner *or later* it will tell upon them, if it is manifestly sincere, and beautified with the happiness of love.

Let us get to our knees about home-duties. Let us have no mercy with ourselves, while we claim the mercy, large and loving, of the pardon and the hallowing of our Lord.

XVI

Sins in Private Life (ii.)

SOMETHING more must be said about home-life, and the too frequent and too easy allowance there of 'discords with God,' that is to say of sins, grieving His Spirit. I dwell rather specially upon home-life, because most surely, to a large degree, it is a miniature of life as a whole. What the man or woman, lad or lass, is at home, it is likely that he or she will be, taking the sum of experiences, out beyond it; I mean as to the set and tone of character, the temper and the bearing the views about the relation of self to other people. I know that exceptions have to be made. I know personally of cases where a man is by no means the light and happiness of home, while yet he is all that is pleasant and companionable

outside. But then these cases *are* exceptions, and also they have great limitations in themselves. It is a very rare thing indeed for the person who is selfish or despotic at home to be really patient, 'pleasant when he is *not* pleased,' out in the world.

Let us think awhile then of the very common sin of *Inconsiderateness*. It is a 'discord with God,' however easily it passes muster—especially with the inconsiderate person himself. It means the very opposite of that practical love which 'finds its felicity in another's good.' So it is necessarily a discord with Him who is holy Love. So far as it goes, it means an outlook through our own eyes only, for our own ease or pleasure only. It means a forgetting, if not a rejection, of two great rules for right living along with other people—the rule to take trouble, and the rule to save trouble. It means a grave defect in that elementary Christian law, 'Honour all men'; treat everyone with the respect due to persons made by Him who made all men to be His image and His servants. '*Everyone is the better for being treated with respect*'; that maxim reaches far with its truth; all inconsiderateness violates it.

Is it not violated too often in homes where everything should rebuke it—tradition, education, example—the example, perhaps, of just those who might naturally think themselves most exempt, if any one could be—the eldest, the frailest, the most suffering? Is not self and its will intruded all too freely often by the younger members of the circle, as if the convenience of 'Number One' were all important? Is the happiness of home never spoilt by purely selfish habits, laziness of a morning, intemperate smoking,

thoughtless unpunctuality, careless noise, the infliction on servants of needless trouble, the total failure to think in little things how to make life around us sweeter and brighter by our ways? The duty of manner, the quiet unaffected courtesy which simply means thoughtful and attentive kindness, the watchful aim to smooth and brighten the hours, the small acts or abstinences, almost indefinable, yet so welcome, which mean care for others' nerves and hearts—these things are easily forgotten. But the forgetting, the indifference, is sin.

A great virtue, a persuasive, winning power for good and for God, lies in the bright opposite. Years ago, when I was head of a Cambridge Theological Hall, I remember the eulogy on one of my students, a grand young fellow in every way, uttered by a true-hearted college-servant: 'Ah, he *was* a consistent gentleman; he *had* a right to speak for the Lord.' And the evidences of 'consistency,' when I put questions about them, were all found to be daily acts and ways of unselfish considerateness.

Here is matter for inexorable self-examination, penitent confession, and 'newness of life' at home.

XVII

Sins in Personal Life (i.)

WE will not forget Considerateness as a 'concord with God' in home-life. The steady practice of it is a real, and a sweet, element in the 'fruit of the Spirit.'¹ I remember a story told me a few years

¹ Gal. v. 22.

ago by a clergyman-friend on Tyneside, on first hand authority, that of the mother concerned. She was poor, not strong, a widow, with several children. The eldest was a great lad, out at work. He came home daily to dinner, and when the dinner was not ready his tired mother was visited with coarse abuse. But the lad 'got converted.' And how did the miracle of grace come out? Well, at home it came out thus: the young fellow still wanted his dinner, and still it was not always ready. But now, when he found it so, he would 'look ever so bright, and say, *Mother, I'll help you get it ready.*' Very simple words, but God was in them. They were a musical concord with the Christ of Nazareth. And their suggestions reach a very long way.

But now let us remember other types of personal sin, 'discords with God' which may or may not disturb home-life specially, but which are distinctively personal. They are all, when we come to reflect, reducible at their root to that great fundamental 'discord with God,' Selfishness—that single principle manifested in innumerable misdoings. Whether it takes lazy or aggressive shapes, it is the same thing at the heart. '*I will not be troubled,*' '*I will have my own way.*' The transgressor has yet to get a vision not of the duty only, which is sacred and eternal, but of the pleasure, which is 'a piece of heaven fallen upon the earth,' of 'living *not* unto ourselves.' ¹ He wants his own way—and exactly so he misses his own purest, most genuine, most unfigurative, happiness.

One such sin is the allowance of habits of self-indulgent indolence, whatever they are. The lazy

¹ 2 Cor. v. 15.

person, who lets sloth get any real hold, and habitually shirks all the pains, all the unattractive duties he can, is a selfish weight on others' lives. That character means a will that cannot have seen even the dimmest vision of the guilt of the 'slothful servant.' ¹ The immense and splendid fact that 'we are the Lord's,' ² bought by Him and belonging to Him, called to be of some real use for His work and will, has found no way there yet. And so the life is a long discord with the mind of the Master who says, 'Occupy, till I come.' ³

One word here to parents, whose children are young enough to have most of their early training still in front of them. For their sakes, for the sake of all that is good, for Christ's sake, love them well enough to discipline them. Shun the fatal mistake of letting them think that they must always come first. A worse initial *education of character* cannot possibly be. The tendency of our time is towards a most unwise removal from the child's way of the wholesome imperative, the call to do things which are not all easy or all pleasant, the law of modesty and respect. In an arresting American book, *Counter Currents*, I read lately how a mother, a kind cultured woman, complained to the writer that her own aged mother, living with her, neither recovered health nor died. It was so hard on the children! It interfered with their pleasures! A frail grandmother should not linger in their way too long! This sort of thing is a reversion, through civilized softness, to the savage state. And certainly it is a 'discord with God.'

¹ Matt. xxv. 26. ² Rom. xiv. 8. ³ Luke xix. 13 (A.V.)

Close to such sorts of sinning, but seen, of course, more often in grown-up lives, is that neglect or contempt of other lives which leaves the man heedless of the dread responsibility of example. We have felt little of the holy insistence of the will of God if we have no sympathy with the Apostle's readiness to sacrifice even the most lawful liberty of habit at the table—'*lest I make my brother to offend.*'¹

And what is our principle and practice about our money? If we wish to be in concord with God, we must firmly and unreservedly remind ourselves that it is all His, entrusted to us His servants. We have no right to pile it up—irrespective of Him. We have no right to spend it—irrespective of Him, and careless of others' needs. We shall all have to shew our accounts up before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Away with greed, and with reluctance to 'give liberally and upbraid not,'² if we do not want to be at discord with God. If we have not come to that point of view, and of will, let us not be surprised if a cloud is on our spirit's life. 'I can get no joy and peace in believing,' said a religious woman to a great missionary known to me. He answered her with all the loving arguments of the Gospel, but the light did not come. 'I think,' said a kindly common friend, 'that the lady you speak of would probably be happier in Christ if, with her large income, she found it easier to part with money for His work.'

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 13.

² James i. 5.

XVIII

Sins in Personal Life (ii.)

YET once more let us think of 'discords with God' which are all too current among us 'practising Christians,' and which we must have no mercy upon in our repentance and confession.

'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father.' ¹ It is solemnly noteworthy how our Master lays stress upon the call *to confess* Him, to let it somehow be known that He *is* the Master of our lives, that He *is* the Saviour of our souls, that what we fain would be and do that is right, pure, useful, serviceable, self-sacrificing, has HIM for its secret, its motive power, its reason and its joy.

I have asked myself sometimes, why should this duty need such emphasis? In many other fields of experience the follower has not the least trouble in 'confessing' his leader. In the schools of art, in the campaign of politics, in the worlds of philosophy and science, and then in the army and in the fleet, no pupil, partizan, admirer, subordinate, combatant, needs to be warned *not to be ashamed* of his great exemplar, teacher, leader, commander. And they who have once 'seen the SON,' ² not in His boundless love only and fathomless humiliation, but in His ineffable greatness and glory, may well wonder why they are ever tempted to be 'ashamed' of His Name. Yet so sometimes they are.

The analysis of reasons in any complete sort is too difficult for me. I can only say that the secret

¹ Matt. x. 32, 33.

² John vi. 40.

must have much to do with this great Leader's demand upon His follower to confess himself, as such, a sinner, saved in mercy, before he was lifted up to be a Christian indeed, walking in strength and truth. However dimly, 'the world' knows that to be a Christian means, deep within, to be a penitent, and to owe all to a Redeemer. And that Redeemer won His victory in ways so remote from 'the world's' current ideals, that both the man and, at *first sight*, at *half sight*, the Master, have that about them which does not make 'confession before men' easy. But His will is that we should make it.

How it is to be done, at such a time, by such a person, is a question no one can answer offhand for another. In countless cases the doing will lie vastly more in the life than on the lips; assuredly the lips without the life are futile. But if we are indeed inhabited by His Spirit, the mouth will not, cannot, always be silent about His surpassing Name.

One practical suggestion let me make here. Let us aim to confess Him, as far as may be, in the way of humbly but articulately *witnessing* to Him. Let us watch for, let us take, every opportunity—and such moments are sure to come, *as we hold ourselves ready*,—to let others know what for us, for our temptations, toils, cares, sorrows, sufferings, the Lord Jesus Christ is. That is not preaching. It asks neither pulpit nor pedestal. It is quite humble and natural. But it is a thing of power.

Then further, let us begin, us Christians who believe and worship, *with one another*. Do we ever find ourselves 'confessing Him' *to one another*? The old Evangelicals of a century and more ago often sat

up late at night—simply comparing their experiences of Him. And we may be sure that their noble courage of public confession drew no little of its holy power from those confessions of the chamber.

XIX

Sins of Omission

IT is said that the saintly Archbishop Ussher, 'the most learned man of a learned age,' but also the humblest of Christ's disciples, was used to pray for pardon 'particularly of my sins of omission.' Few thoughtful souls will fail to see the depth and width of penitence suggested by those words. It needs but some heaven-given insight into the truth that 'the law is spiritual,'¹ is something immensely more, for the conscience, than a code enforcing a necessary minimum of compliance, to realize that our '*fallings short* of the glory of God'² must form, to the last breath, matter for unreserved confession, matter for sheer mercy in Christ.

Many of the sins we have enumerated in these last chapters are, on one side at least, sins of omission; for example, the failure to use our money as a trust from God, or to practise the sacred duty of example. My reader and I can soon, assuredly, add to the list in our seasons of self-examination and confession. It is sadly easy to spend an ordinary day, quite without anything which kind opinion round us would describe as positive wrong, and yet to leave at its close, in the recording angel's hand, an unwritten diary full of

¹ Rom. vii. 14.

² Rom. iii. 23.

omissions. With no better reason than indolence inattention, self-concentration, perhaps all uncorrected in advance by a real 'morning-watch' with God, we have let pass many a natural, many an inviting, opportunity for the affectionate word which would brighten the life next to us, the unselfish doing or foregoing which would make things easier for others, the putting some little act of service into a corner of time which we have seized all too gladly for ease, pleasure, or the work which we like best.

'Teach me this day to keep in view
The prize Thy followers should pursue;
To adorn Thy doctrine, and to shed
Fragrance and light where'er I tread.'

It is a beautiful ideal. In Christ the Lord it is feasible. Not to aim steadily towards it, in Him, is a 'discord with God.'

But I leave these particulars, that we may give this moment of meditation to a sin of omission towards our Lord Himself which surely lies at the back of numberless such sins in their detail.

What, after all, is our working ideal of the Christian Life? Too much and too often, is it not a programme to be described somewhat thus?—to receive all possible gracious benefits from our Redeemer, and, in response, duly to worship His majesty, and to keep our conduct, in some sense, free from obvious transgressions of His precepts. But such a plan and outlook, quite good as far as it goes, makes surely one immense omission. It leaves out of all real recollection who He is, and what He has done and borne, who is the Christian's redeeming Lord. When our thoughts on the Call of Lent draw to an end, in the Week of

the Passion, we shall look more directly and with a more detailed attention upon 'the wondrous Cross'—and its inferences for ourselves. But here already let us, as Christians, say this to one another: We worship a God who, for our sake, for our blessing, not only looked down from Heaven, but came down, Incarnate in our nature; not only came down, but died here where He came; not only died, but died that ineffable, that unfathomable, death. He gave HIMSELF for us, and it was on the Cross that He gave the amazing Gift. We are meant, in view of that Gift, to take indeed for ourselves His dear-won 'cup of salvation,' and to 'drink it heartily.' But oh, we are meant all the while, in the great things of the redeemed life, and also in its little and common things, to catch the 'authentic fire' from the broken heart of a self-sacrificing God made Man. We are called, we are privileged, as His followers, to live as those who cherish the very thought of suffering and sacrifice for others, treading humbly in His beloved steps.

XX

Sins in Secret

THE sins we have thought of so far, whether of act or of omission, have to do, more or less obviously, with other people. Sins of temper for example, of tongue, of inconsiderateness, of the selfish use of money, are things which work on the social surface of life, however deep within us lies hid their root.

It may be said indeed, with heart-searching truth, that no sin whatever, not even the least visible of those I am about to name, can be committed without bad results for other people. All sinning impairs the sinner. It cannot go on, however complete the concealment, without letting some of its poison escape into the whole spiritual and moral constitution. I do not speak now of that obscure, occult 'telepathy' with which, as we sometimes find, perhaps in a startled discovery, one personality tells upon another, we do not know how. I point only to the manifest fact that sins done wholly, as we may think, within our imagination, in our secret region of wishing and liking, never rising in tangible forms to the surface, may grievously blunt our spiritual perceptions, coming, as of course they do come, between our spirits and the Holy Spirit. And we are so made, we are so very far, each one of us, from being a system of watertight compartments, that the spoiling of intercourse with God will do no good to our intercourse with man. We shall lose by it in unselfish readiness, in the clear insights of unselfish sympathy. We shall be less strong, less wise, to serve others, and that to an extent quite beyond our calculation. And meantime we are all called to exist, in Christ, for other people: '*Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good.*' ¹

Yet all the while, even if other people were not in the case at all, the LORD would have always to be considered. Not only is He to be remembered as perpetually *there*, with those 'eyes purer than to behold evil, and that cannot look upon iniquity,' ² except

¹ Rom. xv. 2.

² Hab. i. 13.

to abhor it and to condemn it. Suppose, 'by an impossibility,' that He were *not* there, and that He did *not* see. Do we not worship Him enough, do we not love Him enough, still to feel that the innermost thought which would grieve Him *if* He knew it, ought to be grief to His loving disciple, His devoted vassal?

So then let us fully face our call to forsake the most secret sins. They are of kinds as various as the sins which come out most into sight. Perhaps it is the sin of deep-hidden pride, with its resentments and jealousies, that 'doth easily beset us.'¹ We are letting ourselves dwell on our claims, on our 'just claims,' to this or that which is not accorded us. We are cherishing the thought of slight, of injury, real or fancied, allowing it to live on and ferment in the soul, poisoning the springs of true life, instead of resolutely guiding our consciousness another way. Perhaps it is a sin shallower in its kind, but quite as sure to spoil the truth and health of the spirit—secret vanity, self-complacency, so easily hidden under the profession, even under the bearing and tone, of humility. Its other side shews at once its evil character—the bitterness of mortification, the actual rancour which can follow a wound inflicted on it. Perhaps it is the leave given to the imagination, half unconsciously at first, to visit forbidden fields; the touching and tasting, ever so little, of the literature, the art, that is not clean; the letting thought linger over suggestions that cannot please God. Perhaps it is some habit of wrong, absolutely concealed. There are transgressions of self against self

¹ Heb. xii. 1.

which can in a terrible way master the will, if once the soul dares to trifle, smiting us as with the lift of an earthquake, upsetting all things from beneath.

Let us be thorough with such dark evils. Our wisdom will be to refuse to the utmost all thought on *details*, to fly for our life from looking on the temptation. But we will remember such dangers just enough not to fly for refuge only, but to abide for refuge, in HIM who is our inmost Liberty and Law.

XXI

The Repentant Life : Discipline (i.)

OUR brief and fragmentary view of Sin, and of some sorts of sinning, is over. If we have thought thus to any purpose at all, my reader and I, in our spiritual fellowship, we are more than ever 'utterly purposed not to offend.'¹ We arise from our knees with a profound desire to 'go and sin no more.'² We know enough indeed of ourselves, enough of the soul-searching Bible, enough of the loving, solemn warnings of the Church, enough of our holy GOD, to be sure that never, to the end, shall we get beyond confession of sin, never shall we get beyond the longing and the hope for a *more* entire holiness of heart and truth of conduct. But also we know, from just the same regions of evidence, that wonderful conquests can be achieved within us, great deliverances and cleansings, if we will take the MASTER's directions, and let Him, in simplest submission under His hands, as He dwells

¹ Psalm xvii. 3 (P.B.).

² John viii. 11.

by faith in our difficult hearts, have all His way there. It cannot be in vain that we chant that ancient prayer, looking to HIM: 'Keep us this day without sin.'

Later, we will think more together of His inmost Presence and Power, welcomed in by single-hearted surrender of the will, and found indeed 'able to keep us from falling.'¹ But let us, first in order, listen awhile to our call to *set ourselves in the way* of that merciful work, so peculiarly His own. Let us consider some aspects of that life of DISCIPLINE without which, so I dare to affirm, there is little encouragement to the Christian to expect a glad and wondering experience of the 'keeping power,' the cleansing Presence, of his Lord.

Observe, friend and reader, that I am speaking here not of the initial experience, well known to hearts uncounted, of Conversion to God. It is a divinely *simple* thing to 'turn, and become as a little child';² to 'fly for refuge to the hope set before us.'³ *That* is not a matter demanding a preparatory discipline. It is a matter of sheer reliance on one side, and of the freest possible immediate mercy, ministered through the Blood of the Cross, on the other. 'Just as I am, *and waiting not to cleanse my soul of one dark spot*—O Lamb of God, I come.' I am speaking here of the continuance, the persistence, the perseverance, of the soul in its new life. And here, while the wonder of mercy is always the same, we are indeed called upon, with conscious and resolute 'watching and prayer,' to 'receive the grace of God'⁴ for our hallowing and empowering from above, *taking pains*.

¹ Jude 24. ² Matt. xviii. 3 (R.V.). ³ Heb. vi. 18. ⁴ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

So let us disciples, intently desiring our utmost possible emancipation from 'discord with God' in will and walk, set ourselves to that life of *Discipline* without which the word *Disciple* hardly has a meaning.

Let us steadfastly address ourselves to a genuine painstaking in the Christian life. Before our meditations together close I shall have something to say, as I promised just above, about the inmost secret of holy living, found in spiritual contact with our Lord, 'nothing between.' But that secret is only the better used for being enclosed, like a gem in its casket, within the safeguards of spiritual *painstaking*, a 'methodism' of watchful care and earnest training of use and habit.

I shall not be suspected of any lack of loyalty to my most dear Mother Church, Catholic and Reformed, if I say here that the Roman Catholic Church has some important lessons to teach us. Perhaps the weightiest of these comes to us in the fact that, where her best ideals are in action, *a reverential painstaking about religion* is wonderfully the rule among her members.

Let us Anglicans welcome that lesson. Let us covet the presence and power of Discipline in our spiritual life, a practice of humble and holy painstaking. Let us each judge himself, and severely. No habit of life can be trusted to take care of itself; let us think none of our habits indifferent. Let us 'try our ways,' our daily ways, in the light of God. Then let us spare no disciplinary pains with ourselves, let us slight no genuine help to such painstaking, that so our spirits may be kept wakeful to the holy Will and humbly receptive of the blessed Grace.

XXII

Discipline (ii.) : The Body

SOMEONE has said, and there is a large truth in the saying, though we must not be over absolute when the Sovereign Lord and His action is in question, that God never uses in His work an undisciplined life. Certain it is that the work of God, whatever it may be, calls for the Christian's life at its best. It asks for its spiritual and moral best. Let it not be forgotten that it needs its physical best also, so far as that may be secured by loyal care; for our bodies are the implements of our spirits. And self-discipline, in the normal experiences of life, is quite vitally necessary to our best in all these directions.

To begin at the lower level, the physical. The body, in Scripture, in the Faith of Christ, as nowhere else that I know of in human thought and ideals, is viewed as a sacred thing. The Gospel of the Spirit, the divine Word to our spirit, takes reverent account of our body. It calls the body the temple of the Indweller.¹ The body, in Scripture, is the one normal vehicle of the human will for the 'glorification of God'¹ in human intercourse. Therefore it is to be 'possessed in sanctification and honour.'² It has before it the ennobling prospect of resurrection, or of transfiguration, so as to pass at last into a real likeness to the body of the Risen One's glory.³ Then, upon the other side, our body is the dangerous avenue by which mainly the Tempter invades the will, the imagination, the emotions. From both these poles of truth comes the intense and

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19.² 1 Thess. iv. 4.³ Phil. iii. 21.

hallowing call to the Christian man to discipline his body. Let him make quite certain that, if he uses the resources of his Lord for his inmost needs, for the control and cleansing of imagination and desire, he can, he magnificently can, *live pure*. But to this end, to keep all his physical faculties not clean only but ready for service, let him think nothing trivial in the steady, practical discipline of bodily habit. For Christ's sake let him be, in the strict sense of that word, *ascetic*, that is to say, one who *exercises himself*, athlete-like, to secure and maintain bodily wholesomeness and 'fitness,' 'fitness' in the noblest sense ; 'meetness for the Master's use.' ¹ Let him, with good and sensible counsel, if need be, make rules, and keep them, about sleep and rising, about eating and drinking, about smoking—a trivial thing, it may be thought, but one in which *indiscipline* has culpably shortened, and otherwise hurt, many a disciple's life. So far as he can, and practically at whatever age, let him see that some sort of ordered exercise keeps the physique 'meet for the Master.'

We are not Gnostics, but Christians. The Gnostic thought that all matter was evil. And so he either wore his body to a shadow—or let it go its way in ease and foul desire. We Christians hold that the body is sacred to our Incarnate Christ, that it is one with His holy Body, *and* we know well also that it can be perverted to purposes of temptation by the Devil. So we honour it, and we 'cherish' it ²—because of its true Owner. And we 'bring it into subjection' ³—because of its Enemy.

Here it is obvious to say something about Fasting.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 21.

² Eph. v. 29.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

In all times the Christian Church has enjoined fasting, or at least commended it, in the sense either of total abstinence from food for a time, or of special restrictions at the least. Fasting is sometimes taken to be a practice distinctive of a 'school.' But it has not been so in fact, certainly not in the Anglican Church. Many of the great Anglican 'Methodists,' otherwise called Evangelicals, including the elder Venn,—a noble example—practised it resolutely and severely, and commended it with emphasis. Far from us be the thought that is 'meritorious.' It is no price paid, in the form of present discomfort, in order *to earn* some element of future bliss. It is a disciplinary assistance, to be used in wisdom, in sanctified reason; good for the body, and, through the body, for the soul. Let us seek diligently to see our duty about it, so considered, and then to do our duty, before God and Christ.

Meantime, in the sense of a *never-failing* watchfulness and self-control, in the sense of *never* letting bodily indulgence get out of hand, may our every day be a vigil, and our whole year, our whole life, a Lent.

XXIII

Discipline (iii.) : The Soul

WE have recollected some main principles in the Christian Discipline of that holy and endangered thing, the body. Later, let me repeat it, quite at the close, we shall say more of that 'keeping power' of the eternal Inhabitant of the body and of the spirit to which all true Discipline has regard. But our

own side, our self-disciplinary diligence, is the present thought.

One more word before we leave this great matter, bodily self-discipline. I have spoken of normal conditions, of the body as in common health and strength. But many a true disciple is called to carry about a body wounded, crippled, diseased, palsied, racked with pain, stricken, if not bereft, as to some great faculty, such as sight or hearing. In these pages I do not attempt to touch on the truths, and on the errors, connected with 'divine healing.' I am sure that 'the Lord our Healer' ¹ bids us freely go to Him with our sicknesses, in submission, behind all means, though not in contempt of them. And I am sure also that the medical art is a precious gift of His to man, as much so at least as any other art useful for the comfort of man's life. But Scripture and experience alike make it quite clear that physical suffering may come, and does come, and sometimes in grievous and abiding forms, to the very saints. So it did of old to Lazarus of Bethany, to Dorcas, to Epaphroditus.² And truly we know to-day how tremendously the wounding and mangling of the dear body can fall upon the best believer, in a great martial conflict for truth, mercy, liberty, country, and God.

I allude to this only to remind any honoured reader of mine, who may be sick, suffering, maimed, that to him, to her, 'it is *given*' (at least for the present) 'on the behalf of Christ *to suffer*.' ³ To such a patient the burthen is a sacred talent, heavy with the gold of

¹ Exod. xv. 26.

² John xi. 1, Acts ix. 37, Phil. ii. 27. ³ Phil. i. 29.

heaven. It may be so taken, so carried, as the Lord's discipline, that it shall glorify Him even more than great achievements in high forms of Christian labour could ever do.

About the discipline of the soul, the controlling and 'exercising unto godliness' of thought, affection, will, I say not much. I refrain thus, partly because the subject, so large and manifold, is one as to which each disciple, knowing his own heart in secret before God, can best deal with himself. Two brief serious hints may suffice here.

First, let us always aim to exercise the 'inner man' for holiness rather in positive ways than negative. It is the well inhabited house that is least likely to have its doors broken open at night. It is the soul, occupied first with God, and then, in His grace, busy with all things good, that is least likely to be successfully invaded by evil in the dark. 'Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovable, of good report, think over these things—and God shall be with you.'¹

Then, let us cultivate the holy discipline of a *real* Self-examination, especially at night, with the steady purpose to banish 'discords with God,' as we hear them within us when we listen, and to develop concords. Take any great passage about conduct in the Bible, such as those which we find in the Epistles, in the Ephesian Epistle for example. Place it, without reserve or mercy, beside the day's remembered life. And then speak about it to your Lord, honestly, with worshipping reverence, in penitence and godly fear.

A little must be said here about Confession to man.

¹ Phil. iv. 8.

The explicit Biblical precept is, 'Confess your sins *one to another*, and pray one for another.'¹ We have no really primitive record whatever of any plan of confession more elaborated than this. Gradually, in a series of curious and instructive stages, there grew up, as the centuries passed, a more or less systematized rule of confession, not 'to one another' but to the commissioned minister; a growth which reached its full development in Western Christendom not earlier than some seven centuries ago. Our Church does not impose such confession as a normal duty upon her members. Clearly, in the light of the words of the Prayer Book, she prefers that they, as free children of the heavenly Father, should learn early such a humble thoroughness and confidence of confession to Him, and such a faculty for the use of His Word in connexion with their needs, as normally to require no private official interposition. On the other hand there are, there must be, cases more or less special, cases, as we know, recognized in the Prayer Book, such as great troubles of conscience, grave burthens on the sick or dying person's soul, in which confession—in sacred privacy, if need be—should be made to the Christian Presbyter. The message of truth and, to the sincere penitent, of pardon, should then be sought from him, not as from an individual simply, but rather as *from an Institution*, the commissioned Ministry of truth and peace.

And I cannot deny that there may be souls whose conditions of trial or of character are such that this sort of spiritual aid, used watchfully, reverently, scripturally, always in reverent remembrance of the

¹ James v. 16 (R.V.).

'liberty' of the children of God, may be serviceable in a more normal way. In this matter let none 'judge' another, as a censor, laying down a law. And all the while let each one of us 'judge himself,'¹ always, continually, sternly—about thought, will, word, work, all, in 'the secret place of the Most High.'

XXIV

Discipline (iv.) : Study of the Bible

IN close connexion with the Christian's discipline of life, I come to say something about his use of the Holy Bible. St. Chrysostom, fifteen centuries ago, speaks in burning words, in one of his expository sermons, on the neglect of the Bible. He affirms that in that neglect lies the most fruitful of all sources of misbelief, misbehaviour, confusion and strife in the Church. His words are as true to-day in England as they were in Constantinople in the fifth century.

This little chapter has no space for large questions and discussions about the Bible. I do not forget for a moment the existence of vast problems affecting the Book. But I shall take my reader for granted to a certain extent. I shall assume his assent to that wise saying: 'Do not let what you know be disturbed by what you do not know.' And I shall assume that he reasonably *knows* that the Bible is, in a wonderful way, its own ever present witness to its own super-human mystery; to its being greater by very far than just the 'best thinking' of so many men, however good; to its having had 'the finger of God' working in

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 31.

its construction. For it, alone among books, is at once one and many. It is on the one hand the product of a host of human authorships, ranging, at the very least, over one thousand years. Yet, on the other hand, it is after all a Book, not merely a bundle of books tied together. It has a tone, a character, a purpose, a growth, a goal, all its own. Its vital oneness is attested by a very weighty witness, the universal human heart. Wherever man, spiritually awake, reads the Bible with purpose and reverence, he finds it living, and he finds it *one*.

Then I assume of course the knowledge that to our Lord and Master the holy Book was the very oracle of His Father. '*It is written,*' was His august and pregnant formula of reference.

With such known facts we may open our Bible in peace, and leave aside, for the while at least, many problems of the unknown as we address ourselves to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

I am quite sure that the Christian life, for its fullness, stability, strength and health, its *adult efficiency* as a life for God, normally needs, and vitally needs, all the intercourse it can get with the Bible. On the one hand, as we have just recollected, the Christ Himself turned to the Bible for divine aid and light, as to His Father's oracle. With its words He met the Tempter in the desert.¹ With its words He stayed His most holy soul in the Garden² and on the Cross.³ He died with the words of a Psalm on His lips.⁴ When He rose again, coming back from Eternity to converse with men in the body, He set out

¹ Matt. iv. 7, 10.

² John xix. 28.

³ Matt. xxvi. 54.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 46.

before His wondering followers, 'in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself.'¹ So it is our sure wisdom, if indeed we call Him Lord, to use the Book as He used it. To us as to Him it is to be the oracle of eternal verities, for to-day, and for the life to come.

Then also, such is the Bible, the Christian who practises 'intercourse with the Book' will certainly find that a something great and gracious, large and deep, loving and strong, comes out of it into his inner life, and grows there, a something such as no other reading can bring. Make that Book your friend, and you shall surely catch the contagion of its character, its way of thinking about God, about man, about sin, judgment, mercy, holiness, about virtue here and its glorification hereafter.

But to do this we must discipline ourselves, we must methodize, we must work. 'Justification comes by faith,' said Simeon of Cambridge to his young men, 'but knowledge of the Bible comes by works.' It is indeed so. And the opportunities for such 'works' vary greatly, of course, in varying lives. But a real effort after them, methodized, patient, steadfast, prayerful and believing, is, beyond all reckoning, worth the while. Some of the busiest of men and women, the will being present, have, as life has gone forward, found the way to a wonderful fulness of 'intercourse with the Bible,' and through it with the great Author and His mind.²

¹ Luke xxiv. 27.

² The late Lord Chancellor Hatherley (Sir W. Page Wood) wrote a small book (1869), *The Continuity of Scripture*, a remarkable 'summing up' of the internal evidence borne by the Bible to its own superhuman structure and origin. A legal friend of my own, then a young barrister, spoke with high respect of it to me as the work of 'the best judge of

We too will take thought and counsel, and make a willing and living discipline of our Bible study.

XXV

Discipline (v.): Prayer (I)

WE have thought about a disciplined study of that holy Book which is God's Word, pre-eminently, to man. One parting remark may be made on what I may call the immortality, the renewal of a perpetual youth, which the Bible is always shewing. Only this summer, in the *Times*, I read a noteworthy *communiqué* upon the way in which the Great War has brought out into light and power certain discredited or neglected elements in the Bible, its awful wrath with evil, its stern insistence, in the prophecies especially, on national virtue. It was pointed out how this suggests impressively that the Book, so to speak, transcends Time. It is ready for every age, it waits patiently for even the earthquakes of human history to cast up new proofs of the superhuman truth of its utterances about both man and God.

But now let us turn to the counterpart of God's Word to man, that is to say to Prayer, man's Word to God. Here again I make no attempt to examine and discuss the matter in the abstract. Prayer, like the Bible, gathers round it a whole world of

evidence alive.' Lord Hatherley mentions in the preface the fact that 'for more than thirty years he had perused the whole sacred Volume yearly'—and this in the life of a successful and laborious lawyer, who, when he wrote, was a Vice-Chancellor.

questions, obvious or abstruse. To many of these we can only give the answer, 'I do not know,' an answer which we must often be giving till we reach the coming life of light. But here also 'we will not let what we know be disturbed by what we do not know.' And we know this at least, that the Lord Jesus Christ both prayed Himself and also in every possible way laid it upon His followers 'always to pray, and not to faint.'

Something of *discipline* must assuredly be called in if our praying is at all to respond to that sacred precept. It is upon Discipline for Prayer, Discipline in Prayer, that I speak here.

Practically, I restrain my words to the subject of Private Prayer, to our personal speaking to God apart. Of the blissful benefit, not to speak of the holy duty, of Public Prayer, when we blend our own supplicating, worshipping attitude with that of the Church in the sanctuary of God, I do not now speak. Nor again do I dwell on the call to *the Christian family*, for its very life, wherever it is possible, to pray together. I appeal here for a true discipline of self, of time, of ways and methods, in the work of individual praying. And such praying, let us remember, is most surely necessary to our full reception of blessing, *and contribution to blessing*, in prayer with the Church, or in the home.

So let me earnestly appeal to my friend in God who reads this page to resolve that all through Lent, as if never before, he will discipline and exercise himself in regard of personal prayer. Let us begin with the firm recollection that Prayer, in the mind of the Lord and the Apostles, is emphatically a spiritual *work*, a

vital action and ascent of the soul towards God. It is not a formal thing, perfunctory, almost mechanical. Nor again is it a mere drift of emotions or aspirations, warm but evanescent, on the surface of the soul. Long or short, it is a grave and sacred work of thought, will, affection, turned Godward. It may be, indeed it often will be, so brief as to be instantaneous. But if such 'lightning-prayers' are to be what they can be, they must come from a heart which has already known how to approach the invisible Mercy Seat deliberately, with disciplined purpose, with recollecting reverence, with a true hold on promises and warnings, with some spiritual vision of the crucified and exalted Mediator, with simplest, while reverential, confidence of approach, with a love full of penitence and holy desire.

Such shall our aim be in our discipline of Prayer. We will not let the body baulk us of it, by indolence of a morning, by uncarefulness at night. With resolve, with spiritual hunger, with inner eyes open, in the name of the Lord Jesus, we will 'speak to the Father who seeth in secret, and who rewardeth openly.' ¹

XXVI

Discipline (vi.) : Prayer (2)

A FEW practical suggestions may be offered here upon Prayer, and upon discipline in relation to Prayer. Still keeping the disciplined use of *Private* Prayer in sight, let me try to meet some questions not of theory but use. Look first at the problem how to combine aright the reverent order which

¹ Matt. vi. 6.

must mark our regular approaches to God with that devout freedom which His true child may and should use before Him, and which St. Paul in his Greek calls the *parrhêsia* ¹ of faith and love, that is to say, literally, the liberty to 'say anything,' to keep back nothing. As regards the order of a prayer prayed in secret, methods may be very various. As one of them, let me suggest our taking the Lord's Prayer as our guide in the great elements of prayer and in their normal order. So guided, we shall 'begin with God' Himself, His glory, His cause, His 'sweet beloved will.' Then will come the simplest telling out to Him of our heart's and life's needs and requests, for things present, for 'to-day,' as much or as little in detail as the occasion prompts. Next comes in the confession of our sin, the humble asking, and receiving, of paternal pardon, in Him who is our peace, and the sincere avowal of 'peace with all men' ² in the praying heart. The cry for spiritual grace follows, for the keeping of our utter weakness safe in Him, for His conquest within us over sin and the lord of sin. The guide leads us up at last to joyful praises and ascriptions, to the elevating act of worshipping thanksgiving.

One great matter, Intercession, seems at first sight to be absent here. But surely it is implied, all through the *Pater Noster*, by the beautiful fact that all the petitions are cast into the plural: 'Our Father,' 'Give *us our* bread,' 'Forgive *us*,' 'Deliver *us*.' The disciple may freely use his own method how and where to bring in this sacred, benignant, element, this exercise of prayer for others, so dear to

¹ e.g. Eph. iii. 12.

² Heb. xii. 14.

St. Paul, so rich in fruit not for those prayed for only but for the petitioner himself.

Under every head thus indicated the disciple will freely use the simplest *parrhêsia*¹; he will, in reverence, 'say anything.' He will call people and things by their names. No listener, we are most sure, more cordially welcomes and loves the homeliest explicitness, so it is used in filial humbleness, than our Father who is in Heaven. He is infinite; nothing therefore is too small for Him.

Such praying runs no risk of even seeming to be monotonous. It is very much more than only petition. It includes adoration, ascription, confession. In passing, let me say that the great work of *meditation* can often best be done in prayer-form. The soul thus shapes its thought into words addressed to its eternal Friend, and so the thought is both defined and hallowed in a wonderful way.

The discipline of Prayer includes of course a holy reverence of attitude and manner. Yet a humble liberty may rightly blend itself with reverence. The all-important thing is that the Lord should see *the spirit* on its knees. Often at night the tired head, when we kneel, may quickly yield to sleep. Then let me advise you reverently to stand, or reverently to pace your room. Many a time also the gently *audible utterance* of your prayer will keep thought clearer.

One word, a fragmentary suggestion, shall be said here about Public Prayer, whether the occasion is sacramental or not.² The suggestion is that we,

¹ See above, p. 78.

² And sure I am that the Holy Communion was never meant by its Founder to *discredit* other occasions of prayer. Rather it is to shed its glory over them, and to set its seal upon them.

who seek the blessings of spiritual discipline, should refuse to yield to the modern impatience for short services, and ever shorter. We need not judge others. But we will discipline ourselves so to engage each time in the worship of the Church as to *recollect* the glory and grace of united approach and united appeal to 'Him who is invisible,' but whom we know, and to remember the spiritual help we can bring to others there by spiritual worship on our own part. Services so used, including the divine ordinance of the Preaching of the Word (which has the nature of worship in it), will not lightly then be thought too long.

As a pendant to these suggestions, before I leave the topic of Prayer and its discipline, I must at least allude to the use of *Silence before God* as a way of Prayer. This discipline, as it may be called, has been more or less practised in all ages, from the Psalmists onward, and specially in modern times by 'the Friends.' It has come into recognition and use in a new degree latterly among ourselves, and from many sides testimony is given to its spiritual value. To let the articulate activities of the mind, as much as may be, lie still, while the consciousness in a profound quiet simply recollects the Lord and hearkens before Him, not least when this is done in company together, is a method of devotion assuredly fitted to foster in the inner world both light and peace. When we look at the instructions of the Lord and the Apostles, their constant references to *articulate* petitioning, we cannot for a moment think that the Prayer of Silence is to be *our rule*, as if it were to supersede the outspoken *parrhêsia* of simple faith. But I am

sure it has a sacred place, and not a small one, in the practice of the life 'hid with Christ in God.'

XXVII

Discipline (vii.): The Holy Communion

SIMPLY and briefly, but with reverential care, I come to say something of Discipline, the ruling and schooling ourselves in the fear of God, in connexion with the Holy Communion. I well know that here I stand not only on sacred but on difficult ground. For it has come about, in the mystery of things, that the beliefs of Christians concerning the mode and working of the Lord's grace and gift in the Holy Communion have so seriously developed differences that the Sacrament of peace and union in Him suggests, alas, for many of His disciples, acute debate, conflict of sympathies, separation of hearts.

I think that there is hope now of happier things. True believers on many sides are getting to understand each other better; they find that they have lessons of thought and of faith to learn from one another all round. Still there do exist grave variations of conviction. But to these I refer here only to accentuate what I feel, the call to use all reverent and loving care in anything written about the great Ordinance of Christ, lest even one word should needlessly grieve or separate.

I speak then of discipline in view of the Holy Communion. It is obvious of itself that such a sacred Thing should be approached with godly fear—

that sort of fear which has no 'torment,' for it means *love*, only love low upon its knees, conscious of the awe of holiness. Whatever else the Holy Communion is, it is the Lord's own appointed Memorial of His Death and Passion. It is our self-sacrificed God's own way of setting in the very midst of our faith, and of our worship, and of our love, that supreme, amazing, soul-filling fact, His Suffering for us, His bodily and spiritual Suffering unfathomable, that we, through Him, believed, received, assimilated, used, might live in purity and peace. 'Behold the LAMB of God.' 'Worthy is the LAMB that was slain.'¹ Such is the spiritual voice of the Communion to the believer.

No wonder that the Apostle bids the communicant '*examine himself.*' 'So,' and only so, 'let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.'² No wonder that the Church, in the Communion Office, expressly directs us, in much detail, to do so. If no prayer and thought of our own over the Bible can avail (*and we are intended to use that discipline first*), then we are to seek the spiritual help of the Minister of God in confession, in humble and reverent consultation, with a view to ministerial absolution, in the light of the heavenly Word.

Far more now than in days which I can well recall it is the usage of earnest English Christians to communicate often. The holy Sacrament, if used indeed in spirit and in truth, certainly suggests no reason in itself against such frequency; and to many souls the frequency brings a benefit untold. But it is obvious to remind my reader, if his practice is

¹ John i. 29, Rev. v. 12.

² 1 Cor. xi. 28.

such, that he needs to discipline himself *every time*, with all the purpose of a regenerate heart, with a steadfast aim to meet his crucified and risen Lord at His all-holy Table 'in spirit and in truth.' He should do this as watchfully as if he had the opportunity of Communion only once in a year.

Come, but come as a soul disciplined to remember. Come, but recollecting all the need, and seeking—and accepting—all the blessing. Come, to present, not in a religious formula, but in spirit and in truth, as 'a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice' to Him, 'yourself, your soul and body.' Come, that you, having by faith received Him as Sacrifice and Life, may then pass out into common life and duty, into the free environment of home, friends, associates, in a mood recollected, quietly purposeful; the surrendered bondservant of your sacrificed and living Redeemer, His living limb, existing that you may work His will.

XXVIII

Discipline (viii.) : Sorrows

LET us carry our thoughts a little further on the great, sacred, and most practical subject of Discipline. It is morally and spiritually good to repeat the very word, if we do so with the least insight, with even the least experience of the bliss which comes to the spirit with the loving acceptance of a '*law* of liberty.' ¹ We are indeed 'called unto liberty,' ² to a great emancipation from the iron bond of guilt, from the slavery of self-will, and from the

¹ James i. 25.

² Gal. v. 13.

intrusion of human despotism into the soul's life. But we are not called, thank God, to licence, degraded to the animal level where duty is not. We are lifted, in Christ, to the height of a life where all thought, all action, all will, is always to exercise its sacred freedom in willingly submitting to the 'good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.' ¹

It will be essential to the joy of such a life, as well as to its health and strength, to welcome a perpetual discipline. 'Let him take up his cross,' the stern instrument of death for the execution of the self-life—let him take it up '*daily*, and follow me.' ² Shall we not do it? We shall find, if we yield ourselves simply to God, and to the cross, that the ways of discipline, like the ways of wisdom, 'are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' ³

We have been thinking chiefly so far of certain methods and duties of discipline which we can, more or less, accept deliberately, and, in a sense, manage for ourselves. But the field of discipline is wider than even these great means and aids. The watchful disciple will ask for the blessing of discipline, and look out for it, as it comes conveyed through channels he does not choose at all, nor can influence or modify for himself, but which God's royal will assigns to him. I mean the experiences of life, especially those which have to do with suffering; the 'trials,' the tests, of grief, care, loss, restriction, disappointment, humiliation, or again, physical pain and weakness. I do not confine the school of discipline, indeed, to the sorrows and the pangs of life. The watchful spirit will 'learn obedience'—

¹ Rom. xii. 2.

² Luke ix. 23.

³ Prov. iii. 17.

the always deeper surrender of *grateful happiness*,—from its joys. But the immortal life must be reached before joy will be entrusted with the whole work, or even with the chief work, of ‘exercising’ the spirit in its obedient life. Here, beyond doubt, pain, in one sort or another, is our main disciplining experience.

The Book of God bids us welcome that discipline and seriously use it. ‘Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, He scourgeth.’¹ And the chastening, received, obeyed, *used*, ‘*afterward*’ yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are *exercised* thereby.’² The Greek which is rendered here by the word ‘exercised’ is a term of the *gymnasium*; it denotes exercise as in the athlete’s school.

‘The heart knoweth its own bitterness.’³ My reader knows his, or her, own ache, own outward or inward bond, burthen, limitation, wistful longing, hungry memory, bitter loss, abiding fatigue of difficult duty, unkindly or unhelping environment, broken health, fire of pain; ‘whatsoever sore, whatsoever sickness it be.’⁴ I think with reverence of whatsoever it may be, and I am a man not unacquainted with great grief and (though very rarely so far), with severe pain. All I humbly plead for is that we resolve, before God, and by His grace, that our suffering, whatever it is, *hall not be wasted, but fruitful*. We will not lose its intimate and precious blessing by mere laments, still less by mere murmurings. We will taste and prove the bliss of submission ‘under the mighty hand of God.’⁵ We

¹ Prov. iii. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 6.

² Heb. xii. 11.

³ Prov. xiv. 10. ⁴ 2 Chron. vi. 28.

⁵ 1 Pet. v. 6.

will take refuge—within His will, just as it is. Our cross, *assigned us by the Crucified*, shall be dear. Our hands shall be extended upon it, in the peace which trusts and loves the hand that fastens them there. So shall our discipline be rich in unexpected blessings not for us only but for other souls as well.

I have cast some such thoughts into verse, as follows :

'HERE AND THERE

'*Here* bend thy knees and bow thy neck,
And love the pain by JESUS given ;
He trains thee *here* by chain and check,
And leads on bleeding feet to heaven.

'He schools with lessons kindly stern
His sinner in a world of sin,
And brings thee line by line to learn
The bitter-sweet of discipline.

'But *there*, in stainless heaven serene,
He gives all rules of suffering up :
There joy shall keep for ever clean
The pain-wrought largeness of its cup.'

XXIX

Discipline (ix.) : Service : Hope

ONE more chapter shall be explicitly given to discipline. The theme is practically endless. But we must remember proportion, and I have yet to turn with my reader to the crown of all Lenten meditations, the Lord JESUS CHRIST Himself, and His Passion, and His Victory. So once more only I write Discipline at the head of the page.

Two detached suggestions are in my mind.

First then, as to the whole matter of personal

Christian discipline, let us remember to the utmost possible its intense connexion with our life in God *for others*. We have recalled already how the Christian, not particular Christians only, eminent, or advantaged, or specially dedicated, but every Christian man and woman, is 'saved to serve.' '*Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth,*' another's good.¹ We are not the Father's children only. We are the Master's servants, His *bondservants*, absolutely possessed. And also we are the Captain's soldiers. Our dear glorious men of the New Armies to-day, before they go out to the field, train and drill, with a will and energy grand to watch, as I have watched it often. But with what aim? Much of their drill is aimed directly at the development of their physique, their perfect 'fitness in wind and limb.' Such 'fitness,' no doubt, is personally enjoyable, it is a pleasure in itself. But the whole work of exercise is really bent upon their perfection of power for march and battle in a righteous cause. So with the Christian. 'Every virtue we possess, and every conquest won,' over sin, over self, over sloth, temper, lusts of flesh or mind, harshness or weakness, is in its own nature a joy of the soul. But it is never meant to terminate in ourselves. We are to be the 'fitter' for it, and the readier, '*for the Master's use.*' It is to equip us so that we may better witness for Him, commend Him, 'magnify' Him²—as a glass 'magnifies' the distant star and shews its glories larger. Everything which He disciplines us into doing and being is thus to be of common use. And thus we shall learn, if we will let

¹ 1 Cor. x. 24.

² See Phil. i. 20.

Him teach us, how actually to bless God for our sufferings, for our deepest sorrows, *if they make us better able to help others.* A Christian Fakir in North India, living and loving to-day, lately refused the eager offer of *a pair of shoes* from the scholars in a Mission School. 'I thank you; but I must decline your gift, for I find that even my bleeding feet can win men to Christ.'

Bleeding feet are of the spirit as well as of the body. Welcome let them be, if we can win a soul to Him by them.

Finally, travelling on quite another line, let me speak of a type of discipline which has to do not with pain but with hope. I mean, the hope of the Christian Heaven.

I am sure that we need, as believers, as men and women in Christ, much more than is common in the Church now, very definitely and positively to entertain 'the hope of glory.'¹ The all-blessed Hereafter is to us, in Him, no peradventure, no philosophically guessed 'survival.' It is a reality as great and glorious as the amplest promises of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles can make it. Let us deeply, largely, 'taste the powers of the world to come.'² But as we do so, let one sacred factor in the Hope never be absent from it, for all our discipline will be intensified and also glorified thereby. That life—what, in the wonderful *negatives* of the Bible, do we know about it? It will have within it no grief, no tears nor crying, no pain, no night, no 'going out,' no death for ever more.³ But also—no 'self.' Not for one moment in Heaven will a blessed being seek its own ends, its

¹ Col. i. 27. ² Heb. vi. 5. ³ Rev. iii. 12, xxi. 4, 25.

own glory, gain, or praise. Its joy will radiate ever outwards, to its Lord, to its companions in bliss. *That* is the inmost light in the glory of the blessed life. And therefore, surely, to 'have a desire to depart' into *that* life, in the Master's time, will act with a holy and elevating power on all our Discipline.

XXX

The Passion

IF my reader has used this book for daily readings, the perusal by this time will have drawn near that Week 'much to be observed unto the Lord, of all' His children 'in all their generations ;' ¹ the 'Holy Week,' the 'Great Week,' the 'Passion Week.'

The progress of Lent leads in a spiritual straight line to the commemorations of that Week. It advances at length to the Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, to His arrival 'in lowly pomp' on the day of Palms, to His words and works in the Temple, at Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, in the Upper Chamber, in the Garden ; then to the Priest's evil tribunal, with its outrages and insults ; to Pilate, to Herod, to the soldiers' brutal mockeries, and to the tremendous Cross.

If it were not for that Week, how futile Lent would be ! Suppose the Passion and the Cross blotted out. All our faith, all thoughts of repentance, all sorrow for sin, beautified and glorified by grace and hope, would fade into phantoms, 'smothered, swallowed up in night.' If the Christ had not

¹ See Exod. xii. 42.

suffered, 'becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross,'¹ if He had not freely consented, for us men, in face of a tremendous need of ours, to 'pour out His soul unto death,' that unspeakable death,² then 'our faith were vain.'³ Prayer and fasting, discipline and devotion, they would only be useless hands beating the dark air of an Unseen without a hope.

With the Passion and the Cross, seen now in the eternal daylight of the Resurrection, all that Lent means to the believer falls into noble order, and shines with a luminous reason, with a glory of divine love. Penitence descends to all its holy depth, while it loses all its gloom, all its dread, when out of each self-discovery it looks up to 'survey the wondrous Cross.' All acts and methods of sane and resolute discipline get a new inspiration in view of the supreme Sufferer's indescribable triumph, for us, over the outrages heaped on His soul and on His body, when He not only 'endured the Cross' but wonderfully '*despised the shame.*'⁴ Hope springs into something wholly different from a trembling entertainment of possibilities. She is now

'Faith, with her feet on the rock, and her eyes to the glory,'

to the already revealed bliss reserved for the soul that has '*obeyed*' the sovereign terms of mercy, giving itself over into the possession of Him who bore our sins, who suffered (let me boldly say it) in our place, '*the Ransom, for many.*'⁵

Lent has its very life in the Holy Week. And

¹ Phil. ii. 8. ² Isa. liii. 12. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 14. ⁴ Heb. xii. 2.

⁵ Matt. xx. 28.

every day of all the Forty is meant, for the believing worshipper, in all his prayer, meditation, and discipline, to be irradiated, even if the light shines through tears, by the living, loving, 'bleeding glory' of the Cross, with the open Tomb beside it.

In our life-long Lent may we live all the while between Calvary and the Garden of Joseph. May we see all our Theology from that view-point. May the Lamb of the Sacrifice, who so became the Prince of Resurrection, the First-fruits of the dead, be as large, as ruling, as ubiquitous a Truth in our souls as He is in the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles, the Apocalypse. May all our morals take their colour from the Cross. May our vision of sin, our sense of its absolute deformity, of its mortal mischief, its mysterious doom, and our vision of virtue, alike in its energies of service and its submission to sacrifice, be always kept living by the Passion. May we 'know nothing' as our peace, and as our power, and as our message, while we learn a little more daily of His dying glory, 'save Jesus Christ, and Him—crucified.' ¹

XXXI

The Cross (i.): Its Wonder

I ATTEMPT no treatment here in detail, or in order, of the story of the Passion and the Cross. These brief pages are not the place. From my childhood till now I have read over every year an old-fashioned, modest book, *Passion Week*, by a Cambridge saint of long ago, James Scholefield,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Professor of Greek, preacher of Christ Crucified ; and I know the benefit of such a consecutive contemplation. But here, as we kneel together in spirit on the ' green hill far away,' I only speak out some reflections on the essence, on the soul, of the Holy Week. And now, with all simplicity, as if we had never thought of it before, I invite the friend kneeling at my side to reflect on that short, tender, immense article of the Creed : ' HE SUFFERED.'

' He became obedient ' to His Father, ' obedient *even unto death* ;' ¹ ' Thy will, not mine.' ² And wonderful beyond thought would it have been if the Incarnate SON, the Co-eternal WORD, had, in our nature, consented to die *in any manner*. That the Supreme should, through any process whatever, undergo the experiences of dissolution, the awful exit of human spirit from human body—this would be a miracle of gracious will which the deathless angels might well ' desire to look into.' ³ If the Incarnate Power, traversing for a period the paths of earth, conversant for a short lifetime with human things, had then retired, like a second Moses, to the flowery top of Olivet, or to the mountain cedars, and there, surrounded by a circle of adoring followers, had breathed His soul into His Father's hands, while the sun set in resplendent silence, or the stars in their courses looked down ' in deep amaze ' upon His fading eyes, it would have been an event infinitely wonderful, an act of immeasurably ' great humility.'

But ' He became obedient—*unto the death of the Cross*.' This Person of majesty ineffable, this God made Man, passed *thus* to the grave. With complete

¹ Phil. ii. 8. ² See Luke xxii. 42. ³ 1 Pet. i. 12.

antecedent freedom, but so that the once-made submission inexorably bound Him, He submitted Himself to agonies beyond limit. He stooped to that horror of soul which forced the blood from His body in the Garden ;¹ to all the outrages, the *improperia*, which the Jew cast on Him all that night and which the Roman, on the next dreadful morning, took up with a yet worse brutality ; to the wrongs of two unjust tribunals ; to the abominable scourge, inflicted by the unhappy magistrate who had just owned Him guiltless ;² to the physical and moral tortures of execution on the Cross ; to the final woe of spiritual desertion, so that at last His transcendent courage broke down into the 'exceeding great and bitter cry.'³ He suffered the literal as well as moral breaking of His heart,⁴ evidenced, so surgical science has said, by the double flood shed from His side, where the lance cleft it after death. *Thus* did he experience the act of dying, and the state of the departed.

So, not otherwise, the Incarnate, 'for us men and for our salvation, suffered, and was buried.' Let us weigh often, and deliberately, so far as we can, the realities of the Suffering. Let us take into full account the pure perfectness of the Sufferer, bodily and spiritual, *and* so His inevitably exquisite, unique, sensibility to the dread inroads of pain. So recollecting, let us '*consider*' the Crucified. Wonderful it is to contemplate the mystery and the fact of His Sacrifice, to renew our articulate, our credal, faith in His Propitiation, to receive and to enjoy 'peace through the blood of

¹ Luke xxii. 44.

² Matt. xxvii. 46.

³ John xviii. 38, xix. 1.

⁴ John xix. 34.

His Cross.' ¹ But let us also enter deeper always into the tender and awful grandeur of the *Self-Sacrifice* which that Sacrifice meant for Him. So shall we worship our dear, stricken, transcendent KING a little more as we should. So shall we taste more of the bliss of casting our whole selves under the feet of Him, our infinitely BETTER, and of knowing no ambition but to belong indeed to Him, self-sacrificed, by an act and attitude of the inmost will, to the SELF-SACRIFICER.

XXXII

The Cross (ii.) : Atonement

'WHEN we survey the wondrous Cross,' where shall we close the contemplation? If we have caught anything of the spirit of the Apostles, as we feel its trend and its power in the New Testament, we shall not know how to descend from that Mount, that Calvary, where, even more than on the Hill of the Transfiguration, we see the measureless glory of the mighty love, the adorable lovableness, the gracious greatness, of the Christ of God.

There are theologies, passing for Christian, which set the Cross somewhere away from the foreground; now in the middle distance, now on the remote horizon, now beyond it. I read lately the thoughts of a really earnest youthful soul, in which the idea of the Kingdom of God was prominent, yes, was a matter of unmistakably passionate aspiration. Yet into that vision the Cross did not seem to enter at all. Such theologies are not the teaching

¹ Col. i. 20.

of the Crucified, they are not the faith of His chosen messengers. Let us not presume to be hard judges of other men. The Lord knows the soul, and sees deeper than we do, and loves and blesses where, perhaps, faith has never been taught to express itself to itself aright. But for ourselves it is surely best to be frankly true to the great archetype of the Christian verity, as the Christ willed it to be drawn by His first selected founders and teachers. As for them, they do more than discourse about the greatness of the Cross. They exult in it ; it is their joy, and wonder, and life, and all. That is to say, the CRUCIFIED, in His Suffering and His Victory, is Alpha and Omega to their souls, and the golden burthen of their witness.

The primary aspect of the Cross, as we read the New Testament (and the Old), is its atoning efficacy. He who there gave Himself up to the hands of His slayers, and also to the will of His Father, 'died,' we read, 'for our sins' ; 'bore our sins in His own body' ; had 'laid upon Him the iniquity of us all' ; 'was slain,' that He might 'redeem us to God' ; 'gave His life, a ransom for many,' 'suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God.' ¹ 'He is the propitiation for our sins,' says St. John.² 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,' says St. Paul.³ 'First of all,' writes this same great messenger of the saving Name, 'first of all,' first, evidently, not in time but in transcendent import, 'Christ died for our sins.' ⁴ St. Paul in particular, but all his brethren are with him, links with that

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 1 Pet. ii. 24, iii. 18, Isa. liii. 6, Rev. v. 9, Matt. 20, 28. ² 1 John ii. 2. ³ Rom. v. 8. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 3.

wonderful Death, that awful but most blessed Cross, all the benefits that are gathered under the words, words which are as life from the dead to the sin-convicted soul—pardon, remission, and, what is yet more, justification, that is to say, acceptance before God, with the glad assent of His Law, broken by the sinner, satisfied by the sinner's Head and Representative, the Crucified Son, our Passover and Peace.

Into the virtues of that Cross, so all the choir of the Apostles chant together, and their strain is true to the song of Heaven—man enters, not by the merit of his doings or his sufferings, not by virtue of his tears or sacrifice, but by faith.¹ That is to say, '*nothing* in his hand he brings,' no, nothing. But he brings his hand—empty, and he brings it open. He is a mendicant, yet a claimant too. He is utterly penitent and lowly, but he comes holding out his warrant, written in the blood of the New Covenant,² and so, 'just as he is,' he takes, not makes, his SAVIOUR. Yes, it is so; because the Sacrifice was what it was, immeasurably great, that empty hand receives *the prompt* and faithful gift of God. 'Your sins are forgiven you, for His name's sake';³ 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.'⁴

Libraries of discussion have been written upon the atoning Cross. But the penitent spirit, when it has had a real vision of itself, and of the Crucified, *knows* that in Him, accepted, trusted, welcomed, is the only, and the perfect, and the present, and the perpetual peace and life.

¹ See e.g. Eph. ii. 8.

² Matt. xxvi. 28 (R.V.)

³ 1 John ii. 12.

⁴ Luke xv. 22.

XXXIII

The Cross (iii.) : Redemption

‘FIRST of all Christ died for our sins.’¹ And we, first of all, in our contemplation of the Cross, have tried to follow the Apostle’s order ; we have thought first of all of its atoning virtue for us sinners. Let us not forget one supreme witness to the greatness of that aspect of the Lord’s Death. It was borne by Himself, in that unique and holiest form, His institution, ‘in the night in which He was betrayed,’² of the sacred Eucharist, the Christian Passover. When He gave that great Gift to His Church, for ever, ‘till He come,’³ He bound it fast in its significance, by all His words and all His acts, to His atoning Cross. He took and hallowed bread and wine, to ‘be,’ to His believing disciples, His Body and His Blood. And He so handled them as to set forth His Body and His Blood *as in the state of death*, not life. He broke the Bread. He kept quite separate the Bread and the Cup, so symbolizing the death-state of slain man, when the life-blood has run out from the riven flesh, and is apart. Such were His actions. And when He spoke, He said, in the *complete* utterance as reported, not merely, ‘This is my Body,’ ‘This is my Blood,’ but ‘This is my Body which is given for you,’ ‘my Blood of the New Covenant, *which is shed for many, unto remission of sins.*’⁴ The Holy Communion is the centre and the glory of Christian ordinances. And the Master Himself has, in it, set forth His atoning

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3.² 1 Cor. xi. 23.³ 1 Cor. xi. 26.⁴ Luke xxii. 19, Matt. xxvi. 28.

Death to be the centre and the glory of Christian faith.

‘ I take Him at His word indeed :
Christ died for sinners, this I read ;
 And in my heart I find a need
 Of Him to be my Saviour.’

‘ My SAVIOUR,’ word most holy, most dear, to the repentant and believing soul of man. Whatever else we know about the Lord, let that word enter deep into it all. Let it glorify with its own light of peace and love our creed, our life, our death.

But we will not forget that the Cross displays other aspects. They are radiant all with that central light, yet each is a treasure of its own sort. Next among these I place the *Redeeming Work* of the Crucified.

‘ To save ’ and ‘ to redeem ’ are ideas closely akin, but not identical. To redeem is, to be sure, on one side, to save ; to set free, by ransom, from a previous possessor. But the Crucified Lord, in His sacrificial death, so we read, ‘ redeemed ’ us ‘ unto God,’ ‘ unto Himself.’¹ He transferred us from possessor to possessor. We were not delivered in order to be our own, turned loose into the miserable, the impossible, liberty of self-ownership, which would at once be helplessly exposed to the return of the strong Oppressor with his chain. No ; we became, by payment of the great ransom-price, by His gift for us of Himself, even unto death, the Lord’s own property, the ‘ *peculiar*,’ the personal possession,² of our Deliverer. ‘ Ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price.’³ It was a price indeed, the blood of

¹ Rev. v. 9, and see e.g. Eph. v. 25, 27.

² See Titus ii. 14 (R.V.).

³ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, and see Acts xx. 28.

Incarnate God. That value, if it buys at all, buys absolutely ; it acquires the whole being, entire, for ever.

Is He then after all in quest of slaves? Is it His purpose to bind and to oppress? Well, if a slave means a living soul so appropriated to another that it does *belong*, without rights, and with all its faculties, then your Redeemer does claim you for His slave. His noblest disciples, His own Apostles and martyrs, glory in the word. Where our more timid English reads 'servant,' they write *doulos*, 'bondman, *slave*.' ¹ And the soul that has seen the Redeemer's glory of grace knows no dearer word than that, when it has once proved its meaning to the surrendered will.

Look a little deeper, as we will try to do in our next chapter, and you will see how the love of the Crucified, that love which He *IS*, turns the words 'redemption,' 'possession,' 'servitude,' into the inmost voice of an infinite affection.

XXXIV

The Cross (iv.) : Surrender (I)

'**H**E went, and sold all that he had, and bought it,' bought the pearl, so costly, so much desired.² So did the merchant, in the Lord's short parable. There are two lines of interpretation of that story of the pearl. One finds in it man seeking God, the other, God seeking man. Perhaps both are needed to exhaust the deep words of Christ. Certainly either of the two would be true to other

¹ See e.g. Rom. i. 1, one of a host of places. ² Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

revelations of the Word. Here, however, I venture to take the latter, as it puts into luminous shape what is otherwise set forth to us in Scripture, the beautiful fact that He who made man in His own image does still, although man has wrecked that image by sin, 'have a desire unto the work of His own hands.'¹ He does not merely compassionate man; He '*desires*' him, He *covets* him. He seeks him to be more than ever His own, His possession, His treasure. He so longs for him as to give for him—HIMSELF.

That transaction of purchase must indeed effect, as we have seen, an *absolute* possessorship. But for what end, from what motive? That the 'bought article' may be treated with violence, with tyranny, in ways such as the harsh lust of mere power would suggest? No; this absolute possession is sought, is bought, in order that Love may have all its way, that the thing desired may be enjoyed in all the perfectness of its true state, with all the excellences and beauties of which it is capable. It is of the very nature of love to covet, in some sort, possession. But it is equally its nature, if it is love indeed, to desire possession for the joy of seeing the thing possessed at its fairest, its best, its happiest. For love, let us often repeat it, is that which finds its own felicity in the felicity of the beloved.

So did our 'dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,' covet us. In order thus to possess us, He died for us. And so the man who has had, under the Holy Spirit's revealing light, a vision of Redemption, enters into two blissful experiences, two sacred consciousnesses,

¹ Job xiv. 15.

which are in fact only two aspects of one. He understands, in measure, a measure always growing, if he looks the right way, the felicity of being 'not his own.' He consents with an indescribable freedom of will to the Surrender which irrevocably binds him to the will of his Lord, so as to 'live no longer to himself, but to Him who died for him, and rose again.'¹ He rejoices to exist, in all the fulness of his existence, sincerely for Another. On the other side he comes to see, to touch, to taste, something of that 'love of Christ which passeth knowledge'² as it can in no wise be understood till the contact is made from within the prison-sanctuary of the holy Will. That hidden knowledge demands some actual experience of 'the service which is perfect freedom,' aye (to go back to the Latin of that great Collect, to its *cui servire regnare est*) the 'servitude' which is the 'royalty' of the surrendered soul:

' My will is not mine own
Till Thou hast made it Thine ;
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign.'

Come then, and let us take this commemoration of the Passion as our epoch for a renewed submission, more entire and open-eyed than ever, to our crucified Redeemer. Let us follow Him down to the 'gloomy Garden,' and up to the indignities of the Trial, and on to the measureless anguish of the Cross. And now, as He stands at its foot, all radiant in His 'indissoluble'³ and victorious life, but to all eternity still the Sufferer, that is, He who for ever *has suffered*, let us give our souls free way, and enter

¹ 2 Cor. v. 15. ² Eph. iii. 19. ³ Heb. vii. 16 (R.V., margin).

afresh into the joys of the redeemed. Let the surrendered hands, clasped in His scarred and sacred hands, feel through them the beating of His heart of love. Let the pierced ear of the self-enslaved bondman ¹ hear, as no other ear can, the pleasant voice of the heavenly Friend who owns him. He 'died and rose, that He might be *Lord of us*, dead and living.' ² 'He shall see of the travail of His soul' ³ in our happy vassalage to His will.

XXXV

The Cross (v.): Surrender (2)

IT is difficult to leave the subject of Redemption, with its counterpart on our side, Surrender. In some all-important respects, the intimate secret of the vitality and health of the Christian life lies here. In many an earnest soul, if I do not much mistake, there is a consciousness, or a half-consciousness, of something lacking within it of the New Testament ideal of a 'spiritual mind,' ⁴ not only devout and desirous, but '*satisfied*,' possessed of an abiding peace and reverent gladness in Christ. And often, so I am sure, not least because of personal experiences, searching and humiliating, this failure of satisfaction, this lack of the promised rest of soul, is due to our inadequacy of surrender to the loving claim of our Redeemer. 'That He might be Lord of us, dead and living' (so I render, or paraphrase, the Greek of Rom. xiv. 9)—*that*, says the Apostle, as we remembered

¹ See Exod. xxi. 6.

² Isa. liii. 11.

³ Rom. xiv. 9.

⁴ Rom. viii. 6.

just above, was one great purpose of the self-sacrificial Death. Surely, till that purpose finds its satisfaction in the disciple's willing yielding of the will at the feet of his sovereign Master, whose sovereignty was bought so dear, the man cannot expect, in the order of spiritual law, to find the 'satisfaction' of unclouded relations with his Saviour King. As we saw under a previous theme,¹ we 'receive the atonement,' the reconciliation, the introduction into the bliss of acceptance in Christ, by faith only; 'which is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.'² Yes, and it is equally full, rightly taken, of holy issues in the believer's conduct. For that reception, in the open and empty hand which means faith, is of *such* a boon, and a boon so won for us, that the true spiritual sequel to it, or rather, the true other side of it, is surrender to the trusted Christ. And it is only when Faith meets and embraces its twin sister, the soul's Surrender, that the spiritual adjustment is completed. Then, and then only, the repose of concord between Possessor and Possession has its way and finds its lasting place.

More than ever then we will watch over our 'submission wholly to His holy will and pleasure.'³ Not only is this absolutely right; it is the one avenue to the promised *happiness* of the believing. And let it be precisely before the Cross that we keep our peaceful vigil. Surrender is set before us in Holy Scriptures not as a sheer duty, suspended, so to speak, in the air. It is put into contact always with this wonderful Redemption, this tremendous, gracious

¹ Above, ch. xxxii.

² Article xi.

³ See the Exhortation before Communion.

Ransom, paid as the price for our 'translation,' our emancipation, from 'the authority of the darkness, *into the kingdom,*' the royal dominion, glad with Heaven's own daylight, 'of God's dear Son.' ¹

' Swift the Man of Sorrows now
 Stoops beside thee, stoops to save ;
Every thorn upon His brow
Makes thee more and more His slave.'

With this humble decision of responsive Surrender always in the heart, let us go out into life, just as, in the will of God, we have to live it. Every waking hour, I say it with decision, will prove such surrender to be to us at once a law and a joy. It will manage and govern our tongues, our tempers, our principles of action, our programme of conduct, *everywhere*, where we have any right to be. It will be thus in things most sacred, in things most common, in business, in pleasure, in the most passing or most practical intercourse. And all the while it will prove to be the organ through which will come silently in upon the faithful soul 'the joy of the Lord, which is our strength.' ²

XXXVI

The Cross (vi.): The Sympathy of the Crucified

' **I** N that He Himself hath suffered, He is able to succour.' ³ The writer to the Hebrews, who, if not an Apostle was at least a Christian Prophet, strikes in these words a note which recurs again and again in his wonderful Epistle. Its great topic is the High Priesthood of our Lord. As our heavenly

¹ Col. i. 13.

² Neh. viii. 10.

³ Heb. ii. 18

Aaron, our eternal Melchizedek, He first, once and for ever, sacrificed and offered Himself for our sins, before the supreme Holiness. Now, in the same character, as our High Priest for ever, as truly sacerdotal upon the Throne as He was upon the Cross, He exercises another sacerdotal function. He blesses, on the ground of sacrifice. He does not stand, as to minister; He sits, as to bless. From hands full of sacrificial virtue He now sheds blessings great and manifold upon His disciples. Won upon His awful altar, showered from His seat 'at the right hand of the majesty on high,'¹ they come upon His redeemed ones, always, for their every need; pardon, peace, holiness, 'everlasting comfort and good hope through grace.'²

Bright amidst that bright shower is the grace of that *Consolation* which alone perfectly meets the cry of human sorrow—the consolation of the Consoler's perfect experience of suffering in His own once broken heart.

He Himself once 'tasted death.' That He might do so, He Himself 'took part,' with us, 'of flesh and blood,'³ of our manhood, suffering and mortal. He Himself, 'in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears; learning obedience by the things which He suffered.'⁴ He was Himself 'author and perfecter of faith,'⁵ that is to say, He was the supreme Believer under suffering. For a *promised, not present*, issue of joy, and for the *coming* glory of love's victory, 'He endured the Cross, despising the shame.'⁵ He 'suffered'—ah, that

¹ Heb. i. 3. ² 2 Thess. ii. 16. ³ Heb. ii. 9, 14. ⁴ Heb. v. 7, 8.

⁵ Heb. xii. 2 (the word '*our*' before '*faith*' is not in the Greek).

ever recurring 'suffered'—'without the gate.'¹ So He knows all about grief, its whole scale and range, in every part of His humanity, body, soul, spirit. So He is amply 'able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities'²—our sensibility to the weight and force of evil, of pain, of bewilderment, of woe, of an outraged heart, of the rending of soul from body, of Hades, of the grave.

Thus 'the wondrous Cross' is the Tree of Life, not only as it bears its golden fruit of atoning mercy, but as it spreads a wealth of healing leaves besides. The green coolness of the understanding fellowship of the Crucified, won by His own griefs, is ever at hand, to be laid all-gently upon the fever of our wounds, upon the anguish of the broken and bewildered heart.³

Not only as sinners but as sufferers let us make speed to Calvary. He who died there, and lives there, will not disappoint us. He has wonderful disclosures of undying joy to make to us—another day. But meanwhile, this wonderful 'first aid' is in His hand this moment, and on purpose for us who suffer: He, in His own person, *knows all about it*.

A few years ago, in some simple lines, I attempted to set out this truth of the Cross; going to the Messianic Psalm (lxi. 20) for the warrant to speak of the Lord's heart as veritably broken. Since I wrote, a great experience of loss has led me more deeply to know that so it is.

' Broken heart, whose nameless pain
Stranger souls explore in vain,
There is One, of skill so strong
He can turn that pain to song.

¹ Heb. xiii. 12.

² Heb. iv. 15.

³ See Rev. xxii. 2.

Once, by agonies unspoken,
 His own holiest heart was broken ;
 Sorer pangs than even thine
 Wrung that Sufferer divine.
 Now His woe in joy is ended—
 Yet that breach abides unmended ;
 For, though suffering pass away,
 To have suffered lasts for aye ;
 Only, breach 'tis now no more,
 But an always open door !
 There the mourner who would win
 Calm and balm is welcome in,
 In the Lord's kind heart and deep
 Holy tears unblamed to weep,
 Till new lights and hopes awaken
 Trembling through the soul forsaken,
 Born of sorrow's secret tryst
 With a once heart-broken Christ.'

XXXVII

The Cross (vii.) : The Disciple's Cross

I N a great hymn, whose words always cast over my heart a peculiar spell, we are taught to sing our praises for the 'generous love' with which our Second Adam, having 'taken man upon Him to deliver him,'¹ consented, 'in man, for man,' to undergo 'the double agony,'

' And in the Garden secretly,
 And on the Cross on high,
 To teach His brethren and inspire
 To suffer and to die.'

Here the Passion, the Cross, the whole 'death-process of the Lord Jesus' (so we may render 2 Cor. iv. 10), is set before us, in its virtue, not now of tenderest consolatory power upon the broken-

¹ So reads one of the Latin texts of the *Te Deum*.

hearted, but of rapturous illumination, making glorious and dear to the disciple his own call to suffer.

It is remarkable that comparatively early, certainly a long while before His own Cross came to be endured, the Lord spoke to His hearers about their crosses. 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself,' let him say no to the self-spirit, 'and take up his cross, daily, and follow me.' So St. Luke¹ preserves the utterance, spoken before the great epoch of the Transfiguration. The dire instrument of His Passion was already present to the sacred consciousness of the Christ, and already He used it to betoken to His disciple that, if indeed he was learning of *that* Master, he must prepare himself not only to serve but to suffer. And the suffering was to take forms, was to have directions and aims, which could not adequately be depicted by *any* sort of burthen. It must be the burthen of a cross. It must be a pain, whatever it was, taken up and carried to a Calvary, on purpose that something might be executed there. That something would be the will of self in its discordance with the will of God. The Cross would have done its work for its bearer when his resisting self-spirit had died on the instrument of its death, when his grief, his pain, his shame, had been accepted, submitted to, embraced, *as his cross*.

To some extent, the stern metaphor would have its meaning at once for the Lord's friends. The sight, at least the fact, of the hideous Roman execution of debased or despised criminals was familiar then in Palestine, beyond a question. But what an un-

¹ Luke ix. 23.

speokable power and impulse would come into the word 'cross,' so used, when the Lord Himself became, in awful literality, the Cross-Bearer, the Crucified ! We may be sure that then every thought of any kind of allotted pain, bodily, emotional, spiritual, viewed as not pain merely but as cross, would be glorified. 'His followers' would then indeed be 'inspired,' as with a breath from the eternal life, 'to suffer and to die.' The element of suffering in their life would be felt to be not normal only but beautiful, noble, a means of bringing their union with their Lord into the fullest, the most intense, realization.

It is so to-day. These are things of everlasting truth, not of dates and periods. Christ the Crucified is the same to-day as then. The relation of the disciple to His will and to His discipline in the twentieth century is exactly what it was in the first. For my reader and for myself, 'the cross daily' is the law of life. A thousand blisses are meant to attend the Christian in his 'progress' as a 'pilgrim.' But if they are to be blessings as well as blisses, they must be conditioned, guarded, hallowed, turned towards immortality, by the daily cross.

Then let us solemnly embrace whatever is our assigned, not self-chosen, cross. Let us 'take it up' every day, and carry it to its Calvary, and allow it there, in deep submission, to do all its work. But let us make sure that this takes place always in full view of the Lord's Calvary, in full recollection of what He won for us there, and what it cost Him, in His self-sacrifice, to win it. So we shall be 'inspired' to 'suffer with Him,' not merely as those

who yield to the inevitable, but as loving, with a great love, the instrument of such fellowship with Him.

I cannot forbear quoting here the two closing stanzas of a heart-moving 'war poem' which appeared in the *Spectator* of Sept. 11, 1915, with the signature 'L.W.' It is a soldier's address to '*Christ in Flanders*':

'We think about You kneeling in the Garden—
Ah, God! the agony of that dread Garden—
We know You prayed for us upon the Cross.
If anything could make us glad to bear it—
'*Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it—*
Pain—death—the uttermost of human loss.

'Though we forgot You—You will not forget us—
We feel so sure that You will not forget us—
But stay with us until this dream is past,
And so we ask for courage, strength, and pardon—
Especially, I think, we ask for pardon—
And that You'll stand beside us to the last.'

XXXVIII

The Cross {viii.}: The Fellowship of His Sufferings

'**T**HAT I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.'¹ So, in that wonderful mine of spiritual treasure, the third chapter of the Philippian Epistle, writes St. Paul. It is one of the many passages in which this unique messenger of the Crucified, in order to carry the message to us, bares

¹ Phil. iii. 10.

to us his very heart, telling us, so far as he can, all that his Lord is to himself. It is an example to be followed, so it be done with watchful humbleness, by Christ’s lesser messengers to-day.

He has just told us, with a noble simplicity and frankness, what a tremendous sacrifice as to this world his conversion cost him, and how this had been magnificently overpaid. He had ‘won Christ’; he was ‘found in Him,’ under the eternal scrutiny; clothed in His righteousness; deep hidden in Him before the holy God. And then, such was Christ, this glorious gain was only the way to ever higher happinesses. It let him always go up and on into a larger knowledge of his Lord, and of ‘the power of His resurrection,’ and of ‘*the fellowship of His sufferings*,’ in a ‘conformity,’ ever fuller and more intimate, ‘to His death.’

Will my friend consider with me, as we kneel still at the Cross of our Saviour, the meaning and message of this great and sacred ambition of St. Paul’s? It is unfolded by him obviously for our learning. He wants us to follow him on into that fellowship, and with him to know its hidden joy.

What does he mean? Not any quest and craving for pain for its own sake. That is unnatural. ‘No man ever yet hated his own flesh.’¹ And the Gospel, supernatural all through, is never unnatural; grace loves to take, transfigure, use, and glorify nature, not to mock it. The Lord did not suffer for the mere sake of suffering. Gethsemane shews us that from the ‘unknown sufferings’ *as such* the very perfection of His nature shrank with an indescribable

¹ Eph. v. 29.

aversion. His glorious conquest over that aversion we know, to the saving of our souls. But let that only intensify our sense of the aversion. No, He suffered *for a reason* which made the suffering worth the while. That *reason* was—‘we men, and our salvation.’

His sufferings were, and are, the supreme example of pain met, borne, conquered, sanctified, for the sake of others. It was infinitely necessary, if man was to be saved from himself and from the second death, that the Christ should, in measures unknowable to us, meet and traverse pain. So He met it ; to its depth and length He traversed it. And He came out on the other side, victorious for us, but to be for ever the God Incarnate *who had suffered*.

May we not safely interpret ‘the fellowship of His sufferings’ in the light of that thought? Whatever else may lie in the deep phrase, this lies in it—the call to the Christian, the noble and uplifting call, to welcome suffering (as God allots it, not as we select it) as that through which we may serve other people. In the last chapter we saw how His Cross may, and will, and does, ‘inspire’ us to the bearing of our cross, even to the place of the death of self. Here is a message kindred, yet distinct, and rich with a warmth and loving beauty of its own. Our cross is needful for our own souls’ inmost discipline. But also, if we take it, carry it, and then yield ourselves to it, in the true spirit, it may prove serviceable beyond all our hopes for the souls of others. Received *and used* in God, it will give us a gentle right to talk with other cross-bearers, to their cheer and aid, as we could not possibly do otherwise. As we let it be known,

in simple, natural, humble ways (it will be ruinous if we make *a display* of it), that we do find in our ‘sufferings’ a near and dear ‘fellowship’ granted us with the suffering Lord, if our griefs can be used at all to make others glad, and to shew them a little more of Him; we shall not only endure our crosses in godly submission. We shall reverently love them. We shall kiss the hand that inflicts them, for it also clasps us into a fellowship with Him which no other means can minister.

XXXIX

Heart-Communion with the Crucified

THE Epistle to ‘the angel of the church of the Laodiceans,’¹ which closes the series of seven in the second and third chapters of the Revelation, is a Scripture whose first suggestion is dark and formidable. The person addressed (I take him to be the chief pastor, we may call him the bishop; a minister, viewed as a ‘ministering spirit,’ and so as an ‘angel,’ only in the body still) has incurred the distressed displeasure of his Lord. He is ‘lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.’ He is declining from a warm, perhaps a glowing, past, towards the zero of the soul. Stern indeed is the warning, the threat, which he receives. And sad ever since have been the associations of the word, Laodicean.

Yet, such is the Bible, such is the Christ, this same dread message contains two of the greatest of divine promises to the soul. One is eminently glorious;

¹ Rev. iii. 14-22.

'the overcomer' shall hereafter *share the throne* of his Incarnate and victorious Lord. The other is tender and gracious exceedingly. The unworthy, unfaithful, decadent, lukewarm disciple—let him only 'hear the voice and open the door,' even now, and he shall find himself in a communion with his Lord most intimate, most tranquil, most blissful. 'I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

Wonderful is this promise, radiant all the more for its dark context. Its appeal is as tender as it is direct to the conscience-stricken Christian who knows he has wandered and has lost the holy warmth of love. No vengeance shall follow his surrender. His excluded King and Possessor will enter the door, opened at last, into the dwelling from which He has been scandalously barred out. And how will He appear? Not sword in hand, but as a well-pleased Guest, and also as a bounteous Host. He will sit down at the penitent's table, spread in the sanctuary of the soul, and furnished with the man's surrendered self. He will feast upon that surrendered self, for it is the royal fare He loves. Then He on His part will transfigure the table into His own, and spread it likewise with the bread and wine of Heaven, even with Himself, surrendered for His unworthy slave—Himself, given for his sins and risen and living for his life.

I love to dwell on the *Laodicean* surroundings of this wonderful 'voice of the Beloved.'¹ They set out 'the omnipatience'² of the Lord Jesus, as the sable

¹ Canticles v. 2.

² So (by C. J. Vaughan) the Greek has been rendered which is represented by 'all long suffering,' 1 Tim. i. 16.

cloud sets out the bow of covenant and peace. And is there any Christian who needs literally nothing of at least the caution, the forewarning, and then the cheer and hope, conveyed by the Laodicean name? But even apart from the context, how ‘unsearchable’ are ‘the riches’ of that promise, that fair picture of the happy guest and Host seated together, mutually giving and taking! What does not this golden verse tell us of the infinite friendliness of the heart of our Crucified Redeemer? He is not content to *save*. He is not even content to *have*. He covets nothing less than the close friendships, the unreserved intimacy, the responsive and unqualified affection, of the sinner He has redeemed. He *enjoys* the man’s ever-renewed self-surrender. He meets it with ever-renewed impartations of Himself.

Who, in presence of this promise, can forget the Holy Communion, the divine Ordinance of love, life, and covenant? Who, being a disciple indeed, has not experienced at *that* Table something of the tender bliss of the Laodicean banquet? Yet the promise in itself cannot be limited to the Eucharist, though through the Eucharist it shines on us in living glory. The Laodicean table is set in the innermost soul of man. Wherever the surrendered soul is, there is that table, and the Lord who ‘overcame,’ who suffered, who sacrificed Himself that He might bless, He with His servant sits there in the peace of love, and there He ‘sees,’ and tastes, ‘of the travail of His soul.’

XL

The Grave

WE have knelt together at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sought there to 'lift up our hearts' towards Him who loved us with a love which endured that Cross, and which has transfigured for ever the terrible and degrading gibbet into the holiest Sign on earth. We have thought out, on simplest lines, what some of the meanings of the Cross are for us the disciples of the Crucified. We have recalled finally that tender glory of the sacrificed Master's heart, His love for the love of His redeemed.

Let us rise up together now, though our souls still worship, and step down from the 'green hill' to the Sepulchre so near to it, this hewn-out cave in the rocky face of the mount. There again we will kneel in worshipping love, and think of the Lord as buried, and of what His Grave means for us. It is Easter Even.

The Bible lays emphasis on that grave. All the four Evangelists take pains to record the Burial—St. John in careful detail. In the great resurrection-chapter ¹ St. Paul specifies the burial of the holy body, along with other points, in his explicit teaching about the Passion and Resurrection. Taking the records of burial and of resurrection together, the Evangelists make us feel as if almost literally we had 'come and seen the place where the Lord lay.'² Let me say here, in passing, but with a profound and mature conviction, that I regard the Burial, when the tomb

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 4.

² Matt. xxviii. 6.

was filled, and the Resurrection, when the tomb was left empty, as facts equally certain, equally 'literal.' Inscrutable is the mystery of transfiguration, by which that most sacred body, 'sown in weakness,' was 'raised in power,' ¹ identically the same, yet other in its new and immortal condition. But mystery is no contradiction to history, least of all when mystery is interwoven with the supreme Event of the history of man, the victory of the supreme Representative of our race.

And now, on this Easter Even, this day of hush and rest, what says to us the grave of our dear Lord Jesus Christ? It says so many things that in this little space in a little book it is inevitable to *simplify* meditation to the utmost. I will not enter, no, not by a step, on discussions of abstruse or dubious points of conjecture or tradition. I will only remind my fellow-believer, here beside me, of some things most sure, which may be realized here afresh, about the Christian's death and the Christian's grave.

First then, beside this blessed Tomb, let us recall for ourselves, in our own bereavement, and in view of our own deaths, the certainty, against all appearances on the material side, that this pathetic thing, the laying out of sight of the beloved body, is *not* to becloud our assurance of the present, conscious, radiant existence, 'absent from the body,' ² of the spirit. He who let Himself literally die, and then reverent hands lifted down the already cold marble of the corpse, and wound it and bound it in the long white linens, and shut the stone upon it, left word, before He died, that He would all the while be living

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 43.

² 2 Cor. v. 8.

still. He would have entered on a life of light and beauty ineffable. 'To-day thou shalt be, *with me, in the paradise,*'¹ in the eternal Eden, in the high Garden of God. As the Master, so the disciples, who are one with Him.

'Their going from us seemed to be utter destruction.'² Who that has stood, or knelt, in the death-room, by the silent form which but a minute before was the living temple of a living soul, dearer to us than our own, has not felt the shock of that thought, if but for a moment? But turn from it, with resolved and recollecting decision, to the buried Christ and His Paradise-promise. It is enough. We need not ask whether or no 'science affirms survival.' The Christ, supreme fact of all facts, not affirms it only, but takes it altogether for eternal certainty. And to-morrow He will rise to seal His promise with His own immortal presence.

Then, this Grave hallows, with a profound and tender consecration, all the graves of His people. In a sense pregnant and beautiful they are 'buried

¹ Luke xxiii. 40.

² Wisdom iii. 3. A beautiful sonnet (*Anastasis*) by Charles (Tennyson) Turner finely expresses this fear, and the victory of faith over it:

'Tho' death met love upon thy dying smile,
And staid him there for hours, yet the orbs of sight
So speedily resigned their aspect bright
That Christian hope fell earthward for a while,
Appalled by dissolution; but on high
A record lives of thine identity!
Thou shalt not lose one charm of life or eye;
The hues and liquid lights shall wait for thee,
And the fair tissues, wheresoe'er they be!
Daughter of heaven! our grieving hearts repose
On the dear thought that we once more shall see
Thy beauty—like Himself our Master rose—
So shall that beauty its old rights retain,
And thy sweet spirit own those eyes again.

with Him,' not mystically only but as to the dear body. I delight to think of every holy place of tombs as an extension of Joseph's garden, aye, not the churchyard only, but the martyr's pile of ashes, the grim cemetery of the battle-field, the 'vast and wandering grave' of the measureless sea.

Think of His grave, O mourner, when you think of that resting place, be it what it may, where your heart lies with your beloved. The immortal Gardener keeps His watch beside it. He has for ever left His own cavern that He may love and tend that plot of yours, till the breath of the eternal Spring, at His command, shall bid your dear flower come forth, and spread its vivid beauty in His sunshine for ever.

I have just looked from my window, amidst a green paradise of Irish beauty, upon a wonderful sky. Low above the forest floats a vast and luminous cloud, red-golden with the glory of the unseen evening sun. A mighty arc of rainbow, the same sun's creation, springs from the pasture to lose itself within that cloud. Even so does our Christ shed heavenly beauty and a radiant hope upon the clouds and showers of death.

XLI

'The Power of His Resurrection'

IT is Easter Sunday. For the purposes of this last simple chapter I assume that my friend has taken my little book piecemeal, a section for a day. So the Forty Days are over, and the radiant Forty-first is here—our Christian sunrise, the festival

of our own wonderful rising again 'to a living hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'¹

'*Christos voskress,*' 'Christ is risen.' This is the universal greeting, the grand and beautiful '*Good-morning,*' heard all over Russia, on her Easter-day. And that small but living and loving Communion, the Church of 'the Moravians,' 'the Brethren's Unity,' has for generations taught her children, when the Easter morning rises, to traverse the paths which wind among the graves in her cemeteries, where the holy buried seed waits for the eternal harvest, and sing as they go songs of Resurrection and of Heaven.

The theme of the Resurrection of our Crucified Lord is as large as it is full of light. Taken as historical fact, that Event is the most stable rock in human history. Subtract it from the 'life of Christ,' and all that precedes in His biography is a bewilderment, an impossibility, a paradox of abortive promises, a disappointment immeasurable and forlorn. And all that follows, the Christian Church, the Christian Character, is an effect without a cause. Leave it in its place in the Scriptures, in the march of history, in the patience and the faith of the saints,² and the darkest of the soul's problems are solved, or solving. The first majestic step is seen to be taken towards the final prevalence of the sun over the thundercloud, good over evil, life over death. At Easter we may well

' Sing ; for even now the eternal summer
Glowing whelms the tomb's weak transient frost
Life descends on death, its overcomer,
And our tears in boundless love are lost.'

¹ 1 Pet. i. 3.

² Rev. xiii. 10.

Who will ever have studied enough the *narrative treasures* of the Resurrection scenes? The Garden, with Peter, John, and Magdalene; the sunny road, with Cleopas and his friend, and the Stranger; then the supper at Emmaus, and the open Vision; the chamber, and its evening lamps, and the table still carrying the remnants of the meal, the fish, the honeycomb; and JESUS standing there, with the great scars visible, and with Peace upon His lips; the resistance of Thomas, and his worshipping surrender; the lake at night, and the fruitless fishing; the shore at sunrise, the Lord standing there and calling; the flash of Peter’s plunge, and then the fire of coals, the breakfast, the colloquy about love, and about God-glorifying death! ¹ Let us read it all again as if it had been unearthed only last year in some catacomb, or convent library. It would shake the world if it were thus new. Well, let it fire and fill our hearts to-day, and other hearts through ours, and so on always. For indeed it is for ever new; it is eternal.

We resolved in a previous meditation always to live our spiritual life, as in a ‘tent of meeting,’ between the Cross and the open Grave. Let us habitually visit that Grave, or rather Him who still in the Spirit walks up and down beside it,

‘Immortal Gardener of the flowery place.’

There, pointing upwards to His own red Cross, with the dear immortal hands which shew the clefts of the nails, and the daylight of heaven through them, He will talk to His disciples about grace and glory, about doing and suffering, about life and death,

¹ See Luke xxiv., John xx., xxi.

about 'His Father and our Father, His God and our God,' ¹

Let the whole theology of our spiritual life find its school and oracle there. There is the warrant for a great, that is to say for a simple, faith in a perfect and perfectly victorious Saviour. There we do not hope *but know* that God is 'the God of Peace,' for He has 'brought again from the dead the great Shepherd, in the blood of the eternal covenant.' ² There we are for ever reassured that this now undying Shepherd is 'with us, all the days, even unto the end,' ³ in the glare and stress of life, in the tasks and sufferings of discipleship, in the valley of the shadow, in the walks of Paradise, in the final Heaven. There we learn to say, and to mean it, by the graves of our own vanished treasures, 'where shall be dressed so soon our turf and stone,' that 'He hath abolished death' ⁴—He, who stands close beside us, yet on the immortal side of the tomb. He holds our hands across it, and only for a little while He conceals our dear immortals—behind His own Presence. There we learn afresh, in our salvation, in our blissful servitude as His possession, in our life as His members, in union with all His mystical Body, to 'rest on Him, and in His name to go,' ⁵ trusting, loving, obeying, even to the end. There He lays, and keeps, His right hand upon us, saying, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, Amen; and I have the keys of Hades and of death.' ⁶

¹ John xx. 17.

² Heb. xiii. 20.

³ Matt. xxviii. 20, literally rendered.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 10.

⁵ 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

⁶ Rev. i. 17, 18.

L'Envoi

OUR series of humblest contemplations is over. Writer and reader, partakers of the 'common' ¹ and most wonderful salvation, we part—but not spiritually. As the Christ of the Cross and the Garden comes always to be more to us, and always better known by us, we are always nearer in spirit to each other.

If our thoughts together, by the grace of that Holy Spirit who delights to 'glorify the Son,' ² have helped us in any effectual way, what shall the issue be? A very simple one, a very ancient one, yet everlastingly new in its experience. We shall know better continually, in the light of the Lord, faithfully sought and used, what the horror and peril is of 'discord with God,' that is to say, of sin. We shall long for holiness, for true-hearted concord with Him in all things, with a longing which will involve the soul's resolute, purposeful welcome of 'all spiritual discipline.' The very word Discipline will be dear to us, not in Lent only, not on set days only, but 'all the days and all day long.' ³ Yet we shall feel that Discipline does its perfect work only as it helps us, with more vigilant purpose, with more intent desires, and also with more entire simplicity of trust, and more constant and immediate use of the discovered secret, to 'live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' ⁴ Diligence and discipline will wholly miss their end if they do not continually bring us to HIM, and leave us with HIM, spirit with

¹ Jude 3.

² John xvi. 14.

³ Matt. xxviii. 20, grammatically paraphrased.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20.

Spirit, 'nothing between.' It is a paradox, but 'it is solved by walking' with God—this life which prays, watches, fasts, welcomes and uses rule and order, finds its lessons, its training, in affliction, carries its cross, and lets 'self' be executed upon it—and yet is lived not by rule and mechanism, but by faith. It is faith thus trained and guided, after all, which finds victory, purity, power, ultimately and only in the Dweller in the heart, in the trusted Christ. For He, intimately near, made by the promised Spirit actually our All in all, is the wonderful and ever present wielder within us of that 'Keeping Power' which can give more than victory. Yes, even more. For when HE gives it, the gift brings always with it not only that particular deliverance but a yet greater thing, a fuller knowledge of the Deliverer.

There, and only there, where faith touches the Inhabitant of the contrite heart,¹ lies the point of absolute contact, the true receptive spot where liberty and gladness, moral and spiritual, become indeed our own, '*given us*, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'² He, so invoked, is able to make and to keep our tempted spirits clean, loyal, and steadfast, in measures which by other means we seek in vain, and which once, perhaps, we dared not hope to reach by *any* means. The talisman is—CHRIST TRUSTED. And what, in effect, in experience, do we mean by a trusted Christ? We mean a Christ *used*, Christ, in His promises, called in to save.

'I made it a rule always to close my eyes at once when the temptation came, and say to myself, JESUS CHRIST; and the Devil always fled before His name.'

¹ Isa. lvii. 15.

² See 1 Cor. xv. 57.

So once a friend of mine, faithful worker now for God and for men, explained to me how, in his own experience of the fierce perils of young manhood, he had been kept victoriously clean in heart and life.

But then, if we would have the soul ready thus to 'use' its Lord, our holy duty, our vital necessity, is to practise, with faithful diligence, in a perpetual yet happy Penitence, the wholesome rules of a real Discipline.

This we will do. Thus we will 'use' HIM. Then, not in a religious dream but in a 'certainty of waking bliss,' it will be given us to live the life which St. Paul, writing to Titus (ii. 12, 14), bade him teach the slave-saints of Crete to live, and which may be ours also this very day. We shall behave ourselves 'soberly, righteously, godly, in this present world, looking for that blissful hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people of His own possession, zealous of good works.'

THE CRUCIFIED

' Sous Ton voile d'ignominie '

I

THOUGH shame is on Thee as a veil,
And thorny sorrow crowns Thy brow,
Think not, my Saviour, I shall fail
To own Thy kingly presence now.
Within the cloud whose blood-red stain
Has hid Thy beauty, I can trace
The indwelling majesty again
Which nought can banish from Thy face.

II

To Thy immortal forehead bright
A mould as heavenly here is given
As ever in the sacred light,
As ever in the calm of heaven.
Never, in Beauty's native home
So vivid was Thy beauty's glow
As when to-day in solemn doom
Up Calvary's hill Thy feet must go.

III

Ye whose glad days, that ne'er are done,
In rapturous service always move,
Who in the Father praise the Son
And in the Son the Father love ;
Angels ! in those blest courts did He
E'er seem more radiant to your eyes
Than here upon the atoning Tree
And underneath the wrathful skies ?

IV

The greatness which in heaven began
Now in His death shall perfect be ;
Thy degradation, Son of Man,
Is glory, Son of God, to Thee ;
The Father's word was, ' I am Love ' :
Then Jesus left the home on high
To make this earth the message prove :
' I am His Son, and Love am I.'

V

Yes, Love He is ; true God is He,
The God through whom God's goodness showers ;
The God we love, the God we see,
God who unites God's life with ours.
Where then can glory higher rise ?
For in this dreadful place I find
My God become my sacrifice,
My God appear a brother kind.

VI

Love is the greatness past compare,
Love is the glory of the sky ;
Love is the very diadem fair
Of God-with-us and God-most-High :
Far from my sight the vision base
Of dignities and greatness be !
On earth, as in the Holy Place,
Nothing is great save Charity.

VII

I worship Thee, O Love Divine !
What skill can sound Thy deepness through ?
But ah ! this lukewarm heart must pine
Unless Thou fill it and renew :

Thou, the soul's glory, joy and noon,
Thou present heaven where'er we fare ;—
This heart demands thee ; enter soon,
And bloom, beneath God's sunshine, there !

VIII

Oh may these eyes be, day and night,
Fist, heavenly Brother, on Thine eyes,
And drink the rays of fire and light
Which there from Love's sweet fountain rise !
Blend evermore Thy life with mine :
Pour Thy whole heart within my heart ;
Make longings for all bliss but Thine
From this enraptured soul depart !

Translated by C. W. MOULE
from the French of ALEXANDRE VINET

G. (Handley Car

lent : to penit
pline, and Christ

